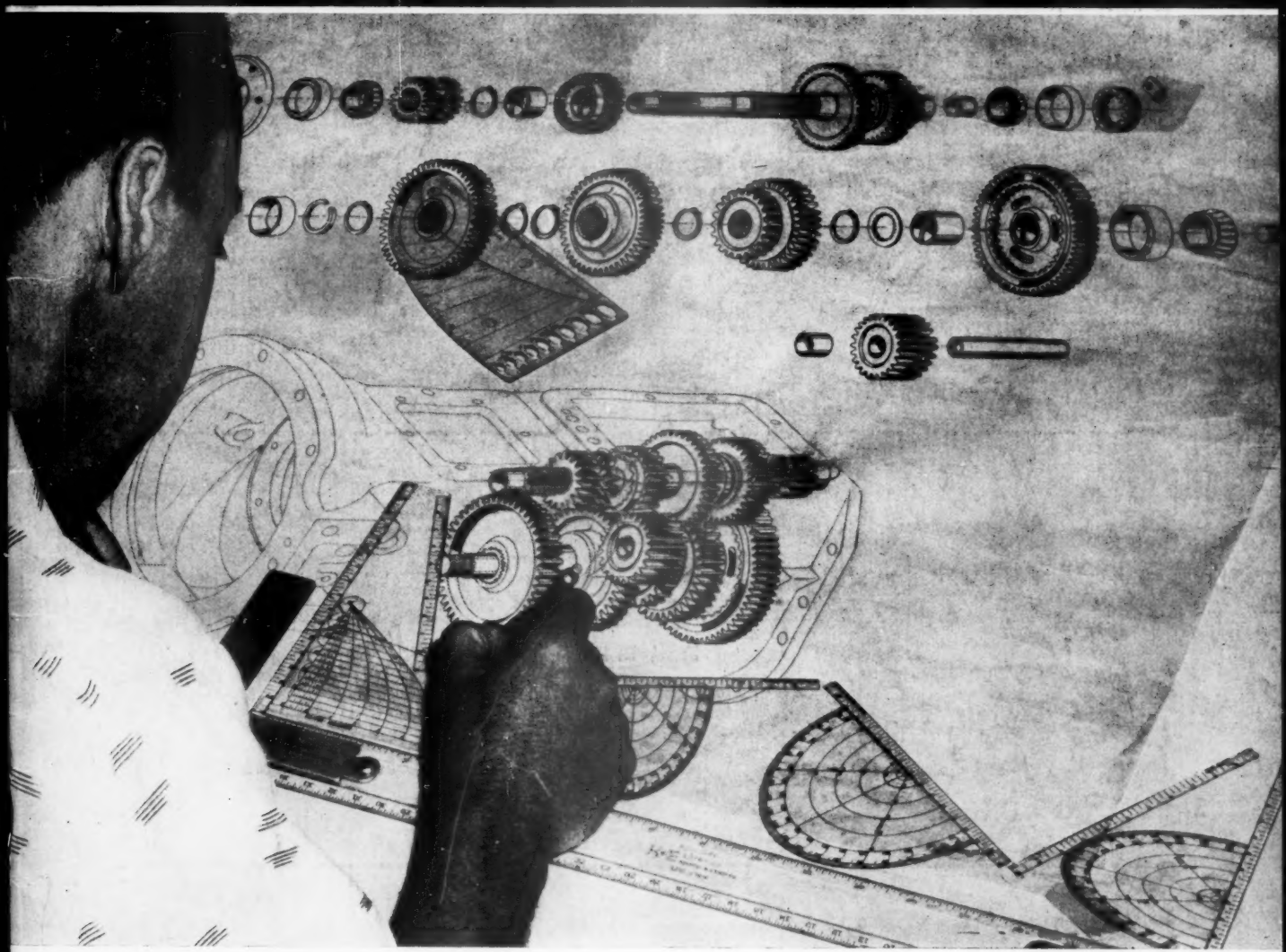
STWE REVIEW



APRIL 1959

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STWE REVIEW

APRIL 1959

VOL. 6 NO. 2 JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY OF TECHNICAL WRITERS AND EDITORS

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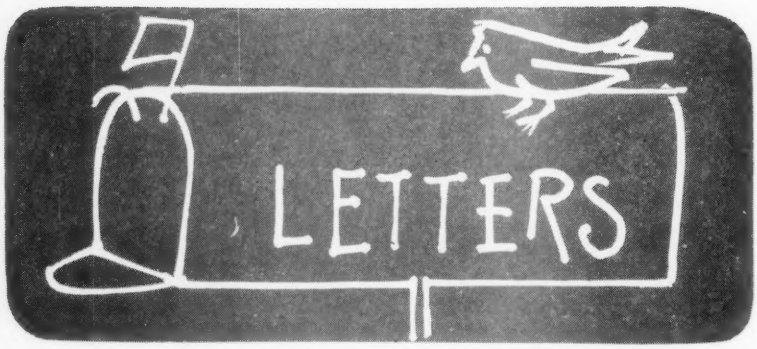


December 4, 1958

Dear Editor:

The force of our Washington convention will be wasted unless it results in an action program, carried out by an action team, as soon as possible.

The future of our free society is in the hands of four men; the man who DEVELOPS things, the man who WRITES about them, the man who MAKES them, and the man who MANAGES the whole effort. Yet, our vital role in this effort is not generally known.

Here is what a friend told me he thought of STWE.

> "You are not half as forceful and effective in stating your own case as you are in putting out complicated technical manuals. You want recognition, yet you understate your position and underestimate your strength."

The writer has the most powerful tool in history, the WORD. This applies not only to the novelist or the political pamphleteer but also to the technical communicator. Today the technical word is often more important than the nontechnical word.

We must first make the public aware of the POWER OF THE WRITER, if we are ever to establish our position as technical communicators in industry and government and in society as a whole. We must realize and we must explain to others that the world's greatest leaders in science, technology, government, religion, etc., were basically writers. From Archimedes and Caesar to St. Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Jefferson, Franklin, Einstein, Darwin, Churchill, deGaulle, etc., we have a series of leaders who were able to command men's loyalties and understanding because they were able to command language and hence could state men's thoughts well. All these men could have made and some of them did make or supplement their living by writing.

No one can be a good writer without being a straight thinker. The straight thinker is a leader and is valued as such because he can do something other people cannot do: think things out and communicate clearly. No one can accuse the technical communicator of merely writing down words; he also thinks and organizes thought.

The writer, being a thinker, is then also a leader—not at the barricades but in the bookstores. He leads, not with the sword, but with the word.

This is the time to set up, within STWE, a Recognition Action Committee charged with establishing the position of the technical communicator in industry and government, and with interpreting his mission to the nation by taking the following steps.

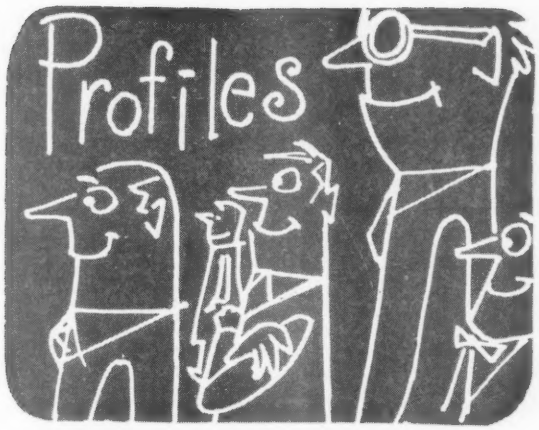
1. Define "technical writer" and "technical editor" so as to make the people as aware of these two as they are of the engineer and mechanic.
2. Establish the writer's power in society. (Get the daily press on our side—we are all writers under the skin—and tell society that the writer is a leader and that he makes a vital contribution to the nation.)
3. Get industry and government on our side BEFORE approaching the general public. (The big money, and with it, big power, are in industry and government. THEY NEED US as much as they need the engineer, the mechanic, and the manager.)
4. Collect, evaluate, and use campaign suggestions from STWE members and other qualified individuals.

The main effort of this suggested Recognition Action Committee should be aimed at making the technical communicator an equal member of the "M-C-C-M" team: Manager-Creator-Communicator-Maker. The committee might consist of top national and chapter officers, assisted by national and chapter public relations committees, and by all other STWE members.

And in the beginning was the WORD . . .

Sincerely yours,
Gerald L. Geiger
1928 Belmont Rd., N. W
Washington 9, D. C.

(Continued on Page 30)



EARL BRITTON

Dr. Earl Britton, professor of English in the College of Engineering of the University of Michigan, is a member of the *Review* editorial board and a board member of the Southwestern Michigan STWE Chapter. He received his A.B. (Phi Beta Kappa) from Randolph-Macon College, his M.A. from Syracuse University and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. Earl has been teaching for 33 years and at present his courses at Michigan include American and English Novels and Technical Writing. He also teaches an extension course in Technical Writing at the Dow Chemical Company.

Among his papers have been: "Efficient Writing", National Convention, TWE, Spring, 1955; "AND", National Convention, STWE, November, 1957; as a representative of TWE and STWE, "Medical Writing", Metropolitan New York Chapter, American Medical Writers' Association, New York, April, 1957; and "What Should the Technical Writer Do About the Participle?", American Association for the Advancement of Science, Indianapolis, December, 1957.

Earl was a member of the staff of the Technical Writing Seminar sponsored by the Southwestern Michigan Chapter of STWE at Wayne University, January 31-February 1, 1958. He also has been Director of the Technical Writing Institute, University of Michigan, June, 1958; Assistant Editor, The Augustan Reprint Society; Editorial Director, *Scientific Writing,* Emberger and Hall, 1956 (Harcourt, Brace); and Chairman, Faculty Advisory Board, *The Michigan Technic* (student engineering magazine, University of Michigan.)

According to Earl, he has: "one wife (from Maine, where we go in the summer), one daughter, two dogs, and lots of hi-fi classical records." He likes woodworking and gardening, and enjoys teaching, especially engineers.

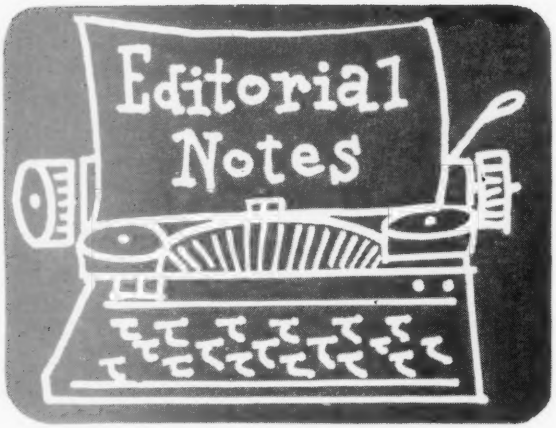
FRANK R. SMITH

Dr. Frank R. Smith was born and reared in Texas. Upon graduating from high school in 1941, he began working his way through college toward an engineering degree. In 1943 he entered the Army Specialized Training Program to finish his degree under military auspices. The program was almost immediately abolished, and he went to Europe in the infantry. In 1946 he enrolled at the University of Texas, in the College of Engineering, but a year later he transferred to the College of Arts and Sciences. He took a B. A. with honors (major in English) in 1948, an M.A. in Creative Writing in 1949, and a Ph.D. in English and American Literature in 1956.

Because of his rather unusual combination of training in English and engineering, he was hired as an instructor by the University of Texas to teach technical writing to engineers in 1949 and again in 1952. In 1953 he was brought to his present school to set up an English program for engineering students. He is now Head of the Department of Humanities, School of Engineering, Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. He and his colleagues teach technical writing, speech, and the humanities to Air Force officers pursuing bachelor's and master's degrees in various fields of engineering. After reading term papers and theses in aeronautical, astronautical, electrical, mechanical, and nuclear engineering for several years, Dr. Smith feels that he has almost completed that engineering curriculum he began 17 years ago.

For relaxation he goes home to his harem and his hobbies. His harem consists of his wife Pat, his daughters Patsy (5-½), Ramona (4), and Rebecca (1), and his cat (who proves all too often she's a she). His hobbies are always more plentiful than his free time. When he can, he reads, writes a little, works in his darkroom, does some woodworking, golfs, and—rarely now—fishes. His hi-fi is shelved until he can house it properly. One night a month he presides as program chairman at the meeting of the Dayton Chapter of STWE.

He is also a member of the American Association of University Professors, the College English Association, and the American Society for Engineering Education; he is secretary of the English Division of ASEE.



The issue in your hands is the sixth in the new series. Speaking for the editorial staff, we are proud of this journal.

Someone once said that doctors bury their mistakes and writers publish theirs. We have published our share. But we have done more than that. We have taken part in the adolescence of technical writing and editing as a profession. For we believe this to be true: our craft is reaching professional status almost in spite of the problems. It is true that more aches and pains are ahead. But it was ever so for adolescents.

The murmur you hear is disagreement between some groups and the shouting in the background comes from the dissidents. But above the noise and beyond the chatter a professional core is solidifying.

There is evidence in several forms; in the courses we attend and the classes we teach, in the books we read and write, and in the local chapter meetings which are the basis of any professional society. But the strongest evidence is the caliber of our national conventions. The recent Washington convention was well-organized, it followed the schedule with reasonable exactitude, and the speakers gave informative and interesting papers.

The best-informed scientists, engineers, and administrators are convinced that the publication, use, and retrieval of technical data is a growing problem which must be solved. It is a project worthy of a concerted effort by our best talents. From the problem and its solutions will come both a more efficient use of scientific knowledge and a recognized profession of technical writers and editors with the several subdivisions of specialties.

And, if we are to be treated as professionals we must act as members of a profession. Our guest editorial for this issue is written by Byron Wels.

Allan Lytel

A PLEA FOR PROFESSIONALISM

In the early days of our profession, it was the custom, when writing had to be done, to have it done by an engineer with little else to do. If an engineer didn't fit in with the company scheme of things, and the firm didn't want to fire him directly, he would be assigned menial, petty tasks . . . like Tech Writing.

If an engineer didn't quite make the grade, he became a technical writer, and many engineering students who for one reason or another couldn't qualify for a degree, settled into the profession, reluctantly.

Now in days of yore, people thought that dentists were people who couldn't get through medical school and become doctors. What we have just heard of tech writers is no more true than the analogy of the dentist and the doctor.

Unfortunately, the time when tech writing was a substitute for a profession is not so long since past. Many of the old timers in the engineering profession still remember, and still think in this antediluvian fashion. As seniority is often the progenitor of promotion, many of these selfsame people are in top-level management positions today.

On the other hand, the writers and editors themselves do little, in frequent cases, to contribute to a better understanding of the problem on the part of management. When the boss barks, the writer cowers, for he too has been bred to feel that he is the most unproductive of the engineering picture. This encourages management to continue to exercise its assumed advantage, thus continuing the cycle in a never ending chain.

In actuality, the history of writing is a noble one. Recall, if you will, the numbers of people who are remembered from ages past. True, the heads of state, the kings and queens, will be recalled first, but sharing second position with the artists are not the business men of the era, but the writers. If you make a concerted effort to recall famous names, you will be amazed at the number of writers counted among them.

In our own time the writer is celebrated. The fourth estate, the journalists, are widely honored, likewise the novelists of our time. The man in the street may not know who the president of General Dynamo is, but he sure knows that Mike Hammer is the product of Mickey Spillane! T-V writers are so much in demand that the fees they earn are extremely high. Even the "gag" writer, who used to be looked down on by other scribes, is now in an exalted position!

Why then, has the technical writer continued to be so oppressed? The answer is a simple one. It is his own fault. To be treated as a professional, the writer must behave like one. When enough of us behave in a professional fashion, we will all accrue the stature and pride that the professional receives. Simply calling ourselves professionals will not do at all.

What's the solution? Let's analyze the attitudes of our creative brethren and take a page or two from their notebooks. First and foremost, we must know our jobs thoroughly. If we work to certain government specifications, we must be thoroughly familiar with the requirements of those specifications in every phase that

(Continued on Page 28)

THE GREGARIOUS SPECIAL WRITER

Susan Shaffer Dibelka

THE tendency of writers to huddle with others of their kind is well understood by members of STWE. One merger behind us and another coming up is ample proof, if any were needed, that writers in special fields of activity have a yen to organize for purpose of mutual profit. What some of us may not be aware of is the number and variety of special writing groups now in existence, nor the extent to which their problems, purpose, and aspiration are reflected in our own.

Such problems as setting up professional standards, achieving professional recognition, and persuading educational institutions to develop formal training programs to prepare us for our work, are not unique with technical writing groups. They are being met by other groups with varying degrees of success. Examining the history, however briefly summarized, of some of the other groups, especially those in related fields, may help us to meet our own problems with better understanding.

First let us consider the number and variety of special writing groups. The 1958 Yearbook of *Editor & Publisher,* trade magazine of the newspaper publishing industry, lists a baker's dozen of associations and societies of writers in specialized fields. Among them are the Aviation Writers Association, the Association of Petroleum Writers, the Baseball Writers Association, Dog Writers Association, Football Writers Association, Education Writers Association, National Associaton of Gag Writers, Religious Writers Association, Swimming Writers Association, and World Trade Writers Association.

Not listed are the American Medical Writers Association, the National Association of Science Writers, the Society of Technical Writers and Editors, or the Technical Publishing Society. Nor is there any mention of the Nuclear Energy Writers Association, whose existence has been rumored, but about whom no vital statistics are currently available.

Dismissing the Gagwriters, Dog Writers, World Trade Writers *et al.* as historically interesting in a discussion of special writers, but otherwise not pertinent, let us turn our attention to the four groups in the foregoing list who are most closely allied to technical writing, and whose aims and purpose to some extent coincide with our own.

Taking them in the order of their seniority they are: National Association of Science Writers, Inc., founded 1934; Aviation Writers Association, founded 1938; American Medical Writers Association, founded 1940; Association of Petroleum Writers, founded 1947. The Technical Publishing Society, founded 1954, will not be discussed since its activities are generally known from other sources.

National Association of Science Writers, Inc.

Founded in 1934 by a group of distinguished science news writers, the National Association of Science Writers, Inc., is made up largely of writers of science articles for the public press. Among the founders were the late Howard Blakeslee, Pulitzer Prize winning editor of Associated Press; David Dietz, of Scripps-Howard newspapers; Watson Davis of Science Service; and William Laurence of the *New York Times.* Better coverage of medical news was one of the objectives from the first days of the organization. Encouragement of more accurate science reporting was another objective.

The purpose of NASW as set forth in the Constitution ratified in 1955 states:

"This organization shall foster the dissemination of accurate information regarding science, through all media normally devoted to informing the public; and shall foster the interpretation of science and its meaning to society, in keeping with the highest standards of journalism."

Membership classifications in NASW are Active, Associate and Honorary. For active membership one must be "principally engaged in the preparation and interpretation of science news, but no person is admitted to active membership whose efforts are primarily directed to promotion of a product or an organization." A minimum of two years activity in science writing is required of all applicants for active membership.

Associate membership is for persons who are primarily engaged in preparation of science information, but who are not eligible for active status due to concern with promotional writing.

Honorary memberships are awarded scientists and other persons who have notably aided the purpose of the organization.

The NASW is affiliated with the American Association for the Advancement of Science. This, together with its traditional concern for accurate medical reporting, influences the choice of the time and place for its two meetings each year. One meeting is held at the time and place of the annual meeting of AAAS, the other is held at the time and place of the annual convention of the American Medical Association.

In 1953 the NASW embarked on a long range program with certain specific objectives: To increase the number of science writers and of newspapers, news agencies, and radio and TV outlets employing them; to convince editors that science news is of the highest interest to readers; to make scientists aware of the necessity for them to cooperate with news gatherers if people are to understand the direction of modern civilization. Also included in the 1953 program was an effort to aid and advise scientific and technical groups, and to enlist support for science.

To achieve its general objectives, the NASW relies upon numerous committees. The Committee on Fellowships and Scholarships, after an extended study, prepared a report "Science, the Press and the Citizen." This report recommends that an independent Council for the Advancement of Science be established, with a full-time, salaried director, and proposes that NASW contribute $2,000 to get things under way.

To encourage new writers, NASW helped to establish the George Westinghouse Awards of the AAAS, through which the Westinghouse Education Foundation honors the best magazine and newspaper articles on science published each year. The Association also helped the American Heart Association to establish the annual Howard W. Blakeslee memorial award to the person making the best contribution to public understanding of heart and blood vessel diseases, in newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, radio, television, or movies. NASW also helps to administer the Lasker Awards of the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation, for outstanding writing in health and medicine.

The roster of NASW lists about 250 members, most of whom are active. A sprightly and interesting Newsletter, published quarterly, keeps members in contact between the two yearly meetings. Mrs. Howard Blakeslee, 5 Longview Road, Port Washington, New York, is the national administrative secretary.

Aviation Writers Association

Twenty-one years ago a group of men interested in aviation and in seeing it properly presented to the American people, got together in New York City to form the Aviation Writers Association. The purpose of the organization, founded in 1938, is as follows:

"To establish and maintain high standards of quality and veracity in gathering, writing, editing, and disseminating aeronautical information."

From New York city the membership soon extended to other areas. As annual meetings were held at aircraft centers across the country, and as writers met on tours, or read about each other in the AWA Newsletter, the Association grew into a national fellowship.

The organization is now divided into thirteen regions in the United States and Canada, with each district administered by a regional director. Numbered among its members are the leading aviation writers and editors of newspapers, magazines and press services in all parts of North America. Names of many members are known beyond the narrow area of aviation activities: Wayne Parrish, publisher of American Aviation Publications; Holmes Alexander, McNaught Syndicate; Roy Alexander, managing editor of *Time;* Alexander de Selversky; Vern Haugland, aviation editor of Associated Press; Ansel Talbert, aviation and military editor, *New York Herald Tribune;* Marvin Miles, aviation editor, *Los Angeles Times.*

Membership classifications in AWA include Member, Associate member, Honorary member, Life member. Active membership is for those who "earn a substantial part of their income from, or devote a substantial part of their time to aviation writing for newspapers, magazines, news services, books, radio, television, or other media, not including house organs or who are responsible for aviation writing in such media."

Associate membership is for those who earn a substantial part of their income from aviation writing or for information services, but do not qualify for active membership. Honorary and Life members are selected from the AWA roster, as qualified by service to the association.

Recognized by the armed forces and industry as the representative organization of the aviation press, the AWA offers its members numerous advantages. Among these are professional accrediting through identification card, pin, and listing in the AWA roster. Roster listing results in consideration for press tours and other aviation events, and placement on aviation mailing lists. The monthly Newsletter to members carries frequent ideas for stories and tips on story sources. Access to information enables writers to increase their knowledge and service to the public in telling the story of air power and civilian flying.

The AWA emblem, which appears on the association literature and pin, is a single wing, signifying an observer, with a quill. Edwin G. Pipp, *Detroit News,* is current president. Ralph H. McClarren, 600 York Road, Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, is Executive Secretary.

American Medical Writers' Association

The American Medical Writers' Association was organized as the Mississippi Valley Medical Editors' Association during the annual meeting of the Mississippi Valley Medical Society at Rock Island, Illinois, in September 1940. It became a national association at a meeting in Springfield, Illinois, in September 1948. In 1952 the association became affiliated with the AAAS. It holds annual meetings in the fall during the annual meeting of the Mississippi Valley Medical Association.

The purpose of the association is to "bring into one association all North Americans who are concerned with medical writing, journalism or publishing; to meet for purposes of discussing medical, scientific, educa-

tional and medical topics; to help maintain and advance high standards of medical literature; to create opportunity for interchange of views so that members may attain such intelligent unity and harmony in every phase of their labor as will elevate and make effective the opinions of the medical profession in their respective communities, in relation to the public welfare."

Classification of members is active, associate, and life. Active membership is open to physicians and others actively connected with the editorial or business staff of medical, dental, or kindred periodicals; medical librarians and health educators; personnel of hospitals, foundations, educational institutions, publishing and technical companies and allied organizations, who are connected with medical writing and publishing.

Physicians who have had two or more articles published in a journal indexed in the *Quarterly Cumulative Index Medicus* may also become active members. Physician members are required to be members of the American Medical Association, or the Canadian Medical Association.

The AMWA administers numerous awards. A Distinguished Service Award, consisting of a gold medal and certificate, is presented annually to a member of at least five years' standing, who has made a distinguished contribution to medical literature or given unusual service to the medical profession.

An "Honor Award" consisting of a gold medal and certificate, is presented from time to time to a nonmember who has made a distinguished contribution to medical literature. Plaques, known as "Honor Awards for Distinguished Service in Medical Journalism," may be awarded each year to a medical periodical of this country or Canada, "for accuracy, clarity, conciseness and newness of information in articles, editorials, and other materials, for excellence of design, printing, and illustration, and for distinguished service to the medical profession."

The Association conducts a non-commercial medical manuscript editing service available to all members for a nominal fee. To be eligible for the service the manuscript must be 5,000 words or less, and intended for medical journals or similar publications, and for which the author receives no fee.

Like other associations mentioned, the AMWA carries on its activities through committees. The Education Committee has had notable success in persuading three leading university schools of journalism to offer a four year course in Medical Journalism and Writing. These courses, leading to a bachelor's degree, are available at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, the College of Journalism and Communications of the University of Illinois, and the School of Journalism of the University of Oklahoma.

The Association also makes partial scholarships available to students wishing to take formal collegiate training in medical writing.

Another important educational activity sponsored by the Education Committee is the Visiting Lectureship on Medical Writing, launched in 1955. Visiting lecturer on medical writing is Dr. J. P. Gray, former dean and professor at the Medical College of Virginia. By arrangement with medical schools and teaching hospitals in the United States and Canada, he delivers lectures to medical students on the different phases of medical writing problems. Parke, Davis and Company of Detroit underwrites the expense of the visiting lectureship program, which is part of the Association's broad educational program to help improve medical literature.

National headquarters of the AMWA is at 209-224 W. C. U. Building, Quincy, Illinois. Dr. Harold Swanberg is executive secretary.

Association of Petroleum Writers

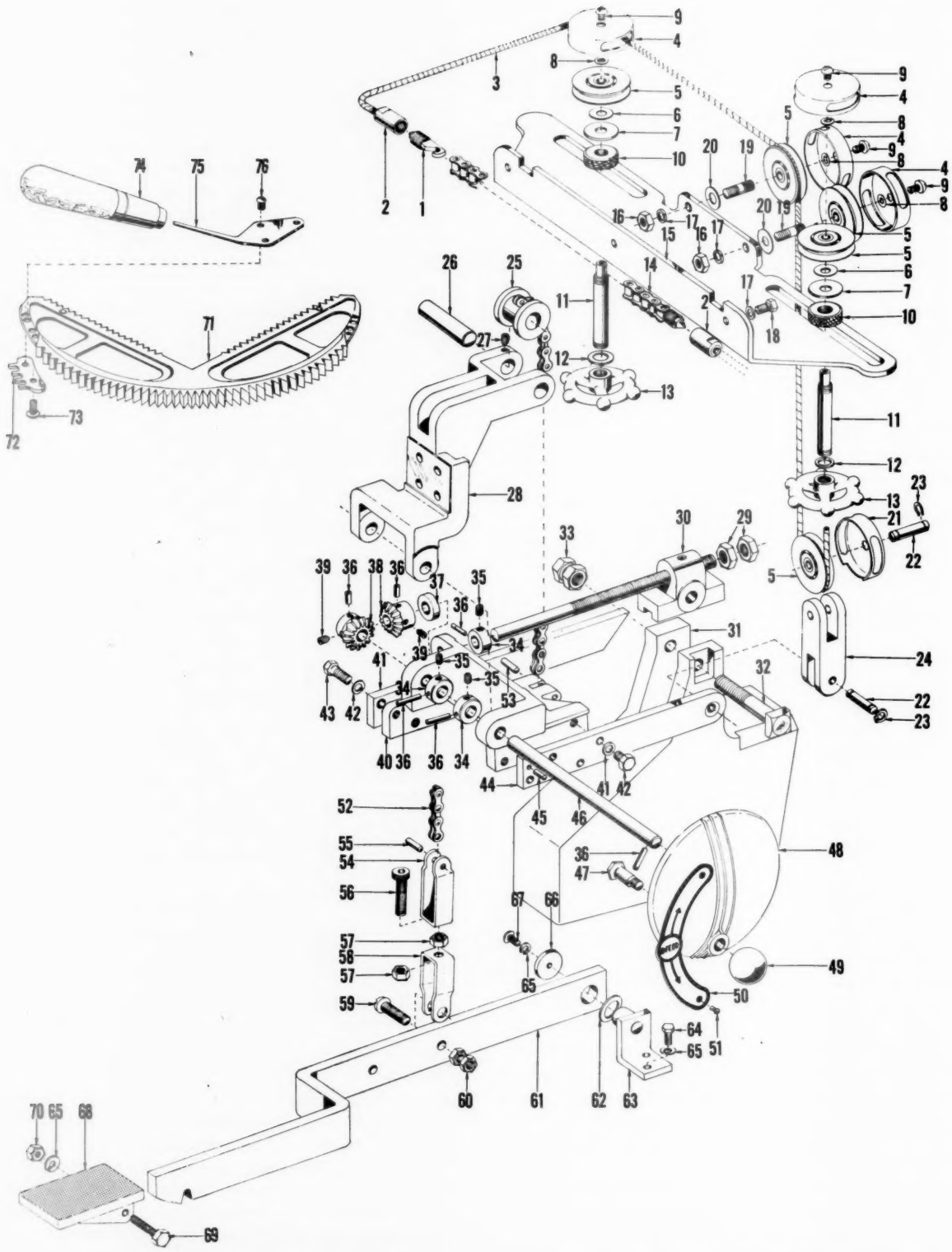
Founded in 1947, the Association of Petroleum Writers has a membership of nearly 300. Its chief function, according to Miss Helen E. Brown, Assistant Secretary Treasurer, is the promotion of better and more accurate reporting, better public relations, and good fellowship among writers in the petroleum industry.

At present there are two classifications of members. Active members are those connected with reporting and writing oil news and technical papers for oil newspapers, magazines, and other media. Associate members are public relations managers for oil and gas companies and associations of the petroleum industry.

The Association holds meetings each year in connection with the annual convention of the American Petroleum Institute. Riley Wilson, oil editor of the *Tulsa World* is president. Among those serving on the board of directors are Ted Brooks, *Wichita Beacon;* John Faxon, *Dallas Times-Herald;* Robert E. Spann, *Petroleum Week,* New York City; Larry McGuan, *The Oil Daily,* Chicago.

Conclusions drawn from this brief summary of activities of other special writing groups in technical and scientific fields indicate that problems of membership, education programs, and setting up professional standards are being solved. Still to come is public recognition of the function and service of the technical writer in our present civilization, and of the significance and value of the literature with which he is concerned.

SUSAN SHAFFER DIBELKA is a free lance writer living in Whittier, California, and serves as staff writer for The Institute for Research, Chicago, publishers of vocational guidance materials. Readers should remember her article, "Training the Technical Writer," which appeared in the July 1958 issue of the REVIEW. She is a member of STWE, the Technical Publishing Society, the National Federation of Press Women, and Theta Sigma Phi—a fraternity for women in journalism.



Courtesy DoALL Co., Des Plaines, Ill.

Figure 1. Exploded View for a Government Manual—Omniscope Method

A PICTORIAL GUIDE TO OMNISCOPE TECHNICAL DRAWING

Douglas R. Witt

Once in a while a new vision rises on the graphics horizon. This is one of them, a new concept in 3-dimensional pictorial drawing for the technical field.

TECHNICAL drawings must be understandable to the reader in carrying the communication message to him. As long as various objects and ideas have been simple, the engineering drawing did the job. However, today's engineering science is different; objects are too complex for conventional drawings to carry the full story. These drawings are excellent for the engineer but poor for the layman. Here is where the engineering drawing failed to carry the communication message.

The Omniscope method of drawing has been developed to fill this gap in present day engineering drawing. Three-dimensional drawing is not new but it is complex and time consuming. The simplified method of 3-D drawing developed by George Thorstad of Minneapolis does an excellent job and does not require years of training to become a good illustrator. Your author has learned the Omniscope method in a period of approximately 25 hours, and since then completely illustrated two government manuals.

This is a method of illustration that all technical illustrators will use in the passage of time.

In Figure 2 you will note the instrument design is such that all needed information is on the tool, axis lines for ellipses, receding line scales and vertical scales

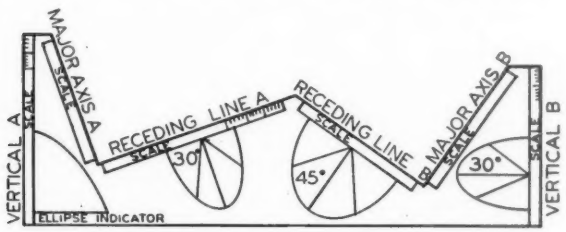


Figure 2

for accurate measuring ellipse protractors. The cube shown in Figure 3 can be rotated in any direction as indicated by the arrows; this means you can choose any view of an object wanted and measure to within a $\frac{1}{64}$ inch using a dimensional drawing or actual part.

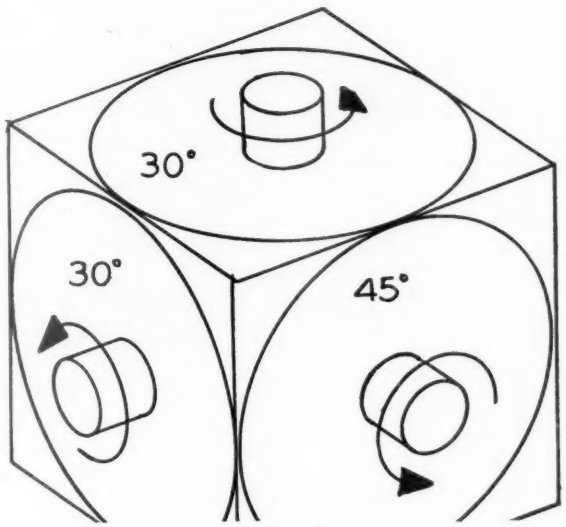
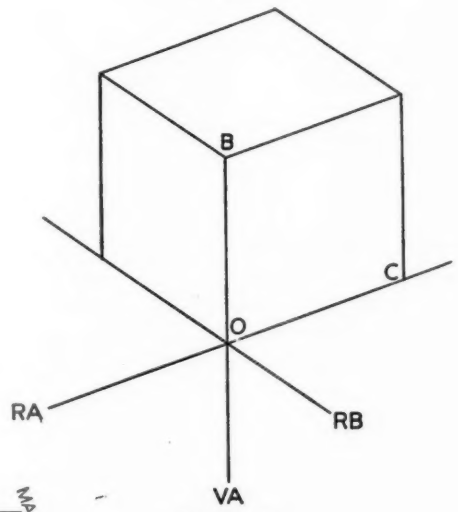


Figure 3



5" CUBE

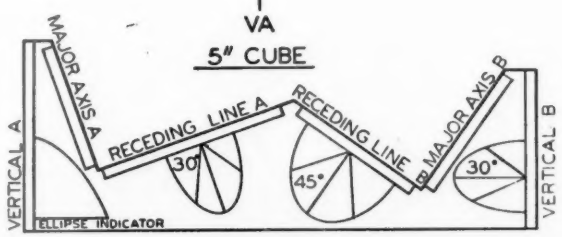


Figure 4

DRAWING A CUBE

The Omniscope instrument is used with a T square as a guide. In Figure 4, receding line A is drawn first (RA). The instrument is moved to the left and receding line B is drawn (RB). At intersection O, a vertical line is drawn (Vertical A or B). Measuring up the vertical line VA from point O the required distance, repeat RA and RB lines to complete the cube.

DRAWING A CYLINDER

In Figure 5, line RA is drawn first. Major axis A is drawn across RA line at O. (RA line demands a 30° ellipse.) The required ellipse size is drawn at RA and O. Measure along RA from O to B the required distance for cylinder length.

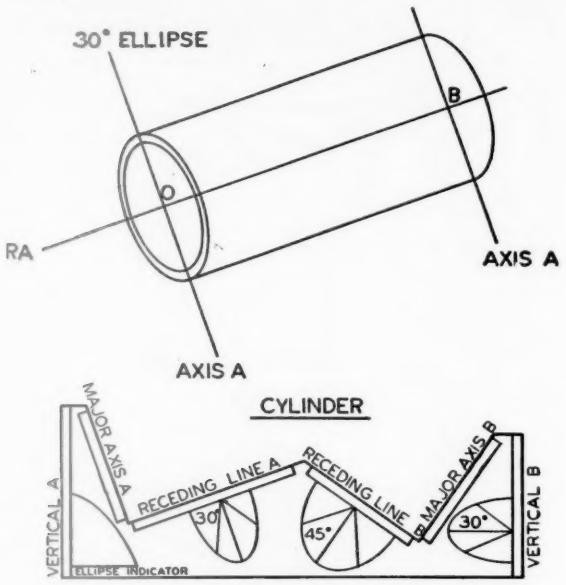


Figure 5

DRAWING A BOLT AND NUT

Figure 6 is a composite of both 30 and 45-degree uses of the ellipse. The threads on the bolt and nut are just a series of ellipse lines drawn 16 to an inch. The center flat on the nut is equal to the width of the bolt diameter.

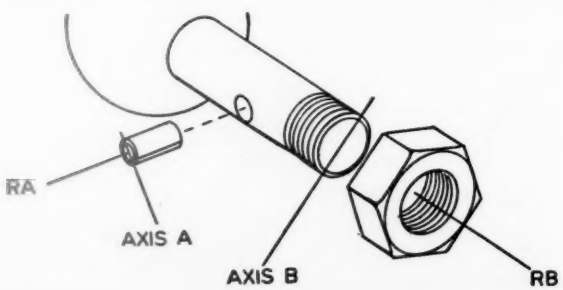


Figure 6

DRAWING A GEAR

The gear drawing (Figure 7) has one ellipse for OD, one ellipse for the root diameter. The gear teeth are 10° apart. Placing a see-thru rule across the 45° ellipse protractor, every 5° is marked off alternately on the OD and root diameter R. The tooth outlines are then drawn in freehand with the flat decreasing in width toward the top of the gear.

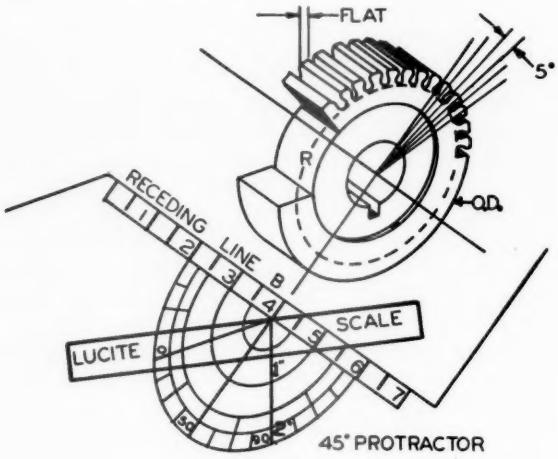


Figure 7

OFF ANGLES

To locate an off angle, a see-thru scale is placed across the center of the ellipse protractor and the degree of angle wanted (Figure 8) such as 180°. A line is then drawn to act as a guide to work from in drawing an object. Ω

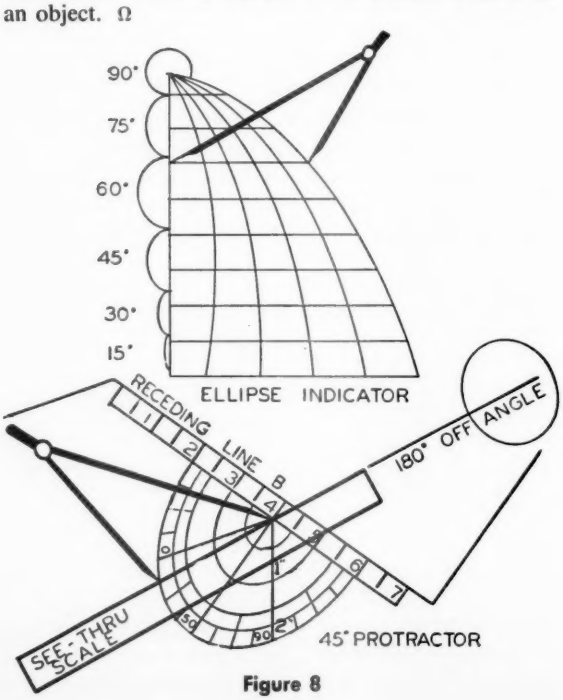
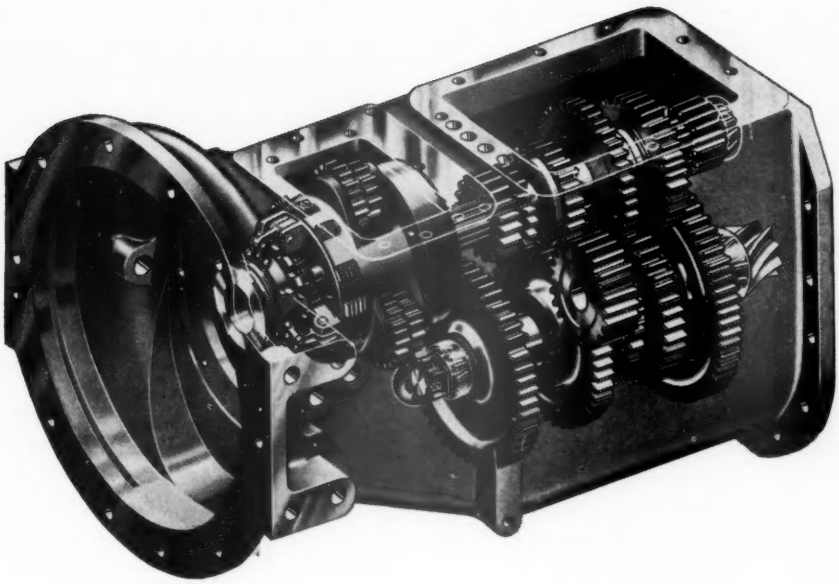


Figure 8



Courtesy Minneapolis Moline Co.

Figure 9. Phantom View of Gear Box—Omniscope Method Airbrushed

DOUGLAS R. WITT is a technical illustrator for Continental Machines, Inc. of Savage, Minn. Readers will recall his article, "How To Submit Photographs For Trade Magazine Covers," which was published in the January, 1959 issue of the REVIEW. Mr. Witt is a free lance writer and member of STWE. He tells us that George Thorstad (Northern Ordnance Co., Minneapolis, Minn.) developed this method of drawing over a three-year period, and it is presently being used by various industrial concerns in Minneapolis.

TECHNICAL WRITING IN GREAT BRITAIN

Alvin Allen

A short time ago, I spent a year in Great Britain as a Technical Publications representative working with British Industry. The company with whom I was employed was subcontracting work, under the Mutual Security Act, to various British manufacturers of electronic equipment. These manufacturers were producing British equivalents of American military electronic equipment for use by the NATO forces.

The prime contract for the work was let by BuShips and, not surprisingly, called for instruction books to be written to the late 16B16(RE) (SHIPS). My task was to instruct the writers of the various companies in the ins and outs of American Technical Writing, to review the finished manuscripts, and to submit them to the U.S. Navy Purchasing Office in London for formal review and approval. Afterwards I assisted the British manufacturers through the usual production phases of photo-offset printing so as to insure that the final manuals would be available "two per equipment."

The program compressed all the experiences of technical writing within a twelve-month-period—setting up a basic organization; training writers, parts catalogers, and artists; editing; supervising production; etc. As can be imagined, this sustained contact with British technical writers provided an unusual opportunity to view technical writing as practiced in a foreign land.

British technical writing is presently just about where American technical writing was twenty years ago. Of the three major companies I worked with, only one, Ferranti Ltd., of Edinburgh, Scotland, had a Publications Department which could handle our work as a matter of routine. This group included fully competent writers, editors, artists, photographers, and multilith operators (who turned out beautiful three-color work).

Ferranti is an extremely energetic and capable organization. While in this country it is primarily known for its excellent transformers, it is a design and development organization of the first magnitude and is doing impressive work in such varied ends of electronics as gun-sight computers and industrial automation. Dr. Williamson of "Williamson Amplifier" fame is on their research staff and is typical of the caliber of men at Ferranti.

The next in order of publications facilities was the British Thompson-Houston Company Ltd. of Rugby, England. British Thompson-Houston had a Publications Department of writers and illustrators, but they were organized to handle the commercial instruction books and publicity activities for large power equipment. Their writers were not technically qualified to plunge off into the deep electronics end and we had to draft semi-willing engineers and technical sales people into a temporary writing department. We were able, however, to make very good use of the art and editorial part of the existing Publications Department.

The third company was the General Electric Company of England which had only a small writing group. Their function was to prepare instruction manuals for GEC's commercial radio and television receivers. They too were not quite geared to the level of technical work required and again, while we were able to make use of their clerical and art staffs, we utilized engineers to do the actual writing.

Both at BTH and GEC we found that taking engineers and making writers of them was not nearly as difficult as it might have been in this country. The general level of primary education being higher in Britain than in this country, all the engineers I met had a considerable comand of the mother tongue.

The prime reason for the lack of a well-developed technical writing profession in Great Britain is the lack of demand for formal military instruction manuals from industry. These manuals are generally made up by the various services themselves (RAF, Royal Navy, etc.) from comprehensive technical reports and data supplied by the manufacturers. The reports are strictly

engineering reports and, as such, are originated by engineers and not technical writers.

Preparation of military handbooks is so considered a government function that it was impossible for us to print classified material except through Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO), which is the equivalent of our GPO and which is the only organization in Great Britain permitted to handle classified work. While much of the actual printing is done by private printing houses under contract to HMSO, the material is cleared through, supervised by, and delivered to the manufacturer by HMSO.

The technical writing field is thus only starting to get under way. The reason Ferranti Ltd. has such a capable staff is that its report work has become too complex and cumbersome to be handled "part-time" by the development engineer. Other companies, however, are also beginning to see the value of technical writers as such and there was much speculative talk, during my stay, about the future of technical writing as a profession. There was even discussion of setting up an independent technical writing service. To date, however, there is no technical writing company in Great Britain. Indeed, it is somewhat surprising that one of our technical writing organizations has not yet investigated the possibilities of organizing a London branch office. I am convinced that the need for one exists.

All in all, the results obtained from the British technical writers was extremely satisfactory. We completed twelve handbooks (five of which were two hundred printed pages or over) — from rough draft to final printed books in just one year and well before actual equipment deliveries were begun. It is, I think, a great credit to the flexibility and capability of the British writers I worked with that, in this short period, they were able to learn our specifications and techniques and produce in a quantity and quality that would do credit to an equivalent American group. Ω

ALVIN ALLEN is Publications Supervisor at the Polarad Electronics Corporation, in Long Island City, New York.

WRITE AND EAT TOO

Irving A. Greenfield

BECAUSE you read this magazine, you are interested in writing. You might be an old pro or someone like myself, who has not yet made the grade as a full-time fiction writer. But I do write to the tune of five figures a year. How? It wasn't easy. It meant long hours of study and a few courses in higher mathematics, a course or two in physics and several in electronics. It meant learning about amplifiers and servo systems, and somehow getting the feel for the strange and exciting world of science and technology.

Technical writing is the art of preparing a book to a particular government or company specification. And, believe me, it is an art, though I am sure many not familiar with the field would take exception to classifying the following type of writing as an art.

> "However, when a positive trigger pulse is applied to a nonconducting tube and is of sufficient amplitude to raise the grid above cutoff, the tubes are switched as current starts to flow in the tube which was formerly cut off. Thus a positive trigger pulse applied to a nonconducting tube in a multivibrator can cause switching action to take place only if the pulse is large enough to raise the grid above the cutoff voltage."

This excerpt is typical of what is written by technical writers. If the function of art is to communicate, then this does just that. And not lacking, is the communication of complex, abstract ideas. Just for a moment, think about the maze of wire, tubes and other electronic components that make up your television set. Amplify this ten times, and in some cases, ten times ten, and you have a good picture of what a technical writer has to explain clearly and concisely to his reader.

Is your interest stimulated? Would you like to take a fling at this relatively new and rapidly growing profession? Sure! But there's always the question of where to start.

Where does a technical writer in electronics start? Obviously, a company will not hire you unless you've had previous experience; the more technical this experience, the better chance you stand of breaking into the field. A writer with technical experience is an odd duck, indeed. Generally, the two worlds never touch one another, so it is up to you to move them together. There are very definite things you can do to gain the amount of technical knowledge needed to enter the field. My own experience is a case in point. I graduated from Brooklyn College with a degree in English Literature, spent two years in the army as an Information Education Specialist. When I was discharged from the service, I immediately tried to land a job as a technical writer, knowing nothing about the field except that I wanted to write. I never got to first base, but I did get a job as an aide, with the proviso that after a week, if I still couldn't read a blueprint, I would be let go. I stayed for almost a year, then moved on to greener pastures.

In the meantime, I began the process of self-education, and it paid off. I sent to the Superintendent of Documents in Washington, D. C. for a list of books used by the armed services to teach their personnel mechanics and electronics. For a long time, these constituted my only reading. Next came the decision to take a few courses at a local engineering college. The fact that I had already received my BA degree helped. I was admitted to the night school and took courses which I knew I could use directly in my work. This effort has not been wasted. I have been employed as a full-time writer for Burns and Roe, Inc., of New York, one of the top companies in the design and construction field. It is impossible for me to say whether the path I took would be the best for another person. Today more and more schools are giving courses, and in some cases, even degrees, in technical writing. It is being taught formally, but the best teaching will never replace the experience you will gain once you sit down at a desk and begin to write about a piece of equipment.

If the be all of technical writing ended with being and remaining a technical writer, then the field would soon lose the fascination it holds. The opportunities offered to a man in the field are too numerous to list. But let me give you some idea of what you can expect. First, if you are interested in professional standing, you will have it. A technical writer is regarded just as much a professional as is an engineer, a lawyer or a doctor. He has gained this status by adhering to the highest possible standards set by various governmental agencies and industry. The technical writer has a wide variety of employment possibilities, ranging from the govern-

ment to large industrial concerns, and down to the subcontractors known as "job houses." Your pay will be commensurate with your experience and the going rate throughout the industry. Most important is the chance for advancement. A good technical writer will always have the opportunity to head a project or projects. He can become a departmental supervisor, where his duties will be more administrative and more concerned with the economics of producing a manual than with the actual writing. There is always the possibility of leaving the field and moving into any one of the hundreds of technical magazines in the capacity of an editor or associate editor. Today, technical writers have the chance to travel, visit the plants where the equipment is being manufactured or in many cases attend actual test runs. Some of this experience may be valuable as background material for the fiction you write, as it was with me. Last year, I spent several weeks at Cape Canaveral, Florida, for my company. Later I used the surrounding country as background for a story which was published in *Gay Blade*. Technical writing is the beginning; the end is always up to the man.

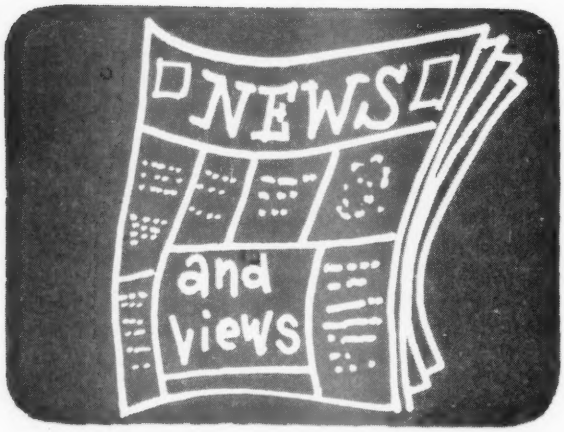
You may not be satisfied with just being a technical writer. You may want to move into more creative work. I did, and my chance came while I was employed by the Ford Instrument Company. Public Relations wanted an article on a piece of equipment that I had some familiarity with. I was asked to do the article. They liked it and sent it to *Aviation Research and Development,* who published it. From then on it was easier. I began to look for this type of work on a freelance basis. I did not care whether or not it carried my byline. I wanted the experience and I got it. Since then, I have written articles and brochures on several different types of equipment for various firms.

Industry has a great need for the writer who can explain its latest developments to the layman or to the potential customer. It is true that you will seldom see your byline on this type of writing, but the satisfaction of knowing it is yours will be tremendously rewarding. Again, if you can tell industry's story, it will inevitably help you to write your own.

Since the advent of the missile age, the future for technical writers is bright. But even if we had not stepped into outer space, each new technological development requires written material, especially if it is for the military. Even the picture for peacetime development is encouraging. Automation, the magic genie of industry, depends on special electronic devices and setups. The operation and maintenance of these will necessarily have to be explained to the men who operate and overhaul the machines. Technical writing is the door opening toward a bright and interesting future. It was for me and can be for you. Ω

IRVING A. GREENFIELD is a freelance writer and member of STWE. He has worked as a full-time writer for Burns and Roe, Inc. of New York. Mr. Greenfield still does technical writing and some advertising copy writing.

Editor's Note: Irv is now a full-time freelance writer and the story of how he became one is, we think, a valuable item to clip and send to the next person who asks you, "How do I become a technical writer?"



EDITORIAL PHILOSOPHY

Many of you will recall the views Milt Aronson expressed on "Clear Writing" in the January issue of this column. I am pleased to include some more of Milt's views. ***RAH***

MEMO TO OUR EDITORIAL STAFF

Subject: Editorial Philosophy

There are two philosophies of editing a trade publication.

The first and most common is the "news reporting" approach. This type of editor spends his time finding the sensational, exciting, dramatic, and exotic new developments in the field. Unfortunately, the exotic and sensational are usually not the workable average, useful, applicable techniques.

The second approach is the "educational" wherein the editor seeks to interpret the existing state of affairs with perspective and insight.

Ask any editor and he will tell you that he does the second. As a matter of fact, very few do this job well, if at all, for two reasons. First, it is a difficult job, requiring deep knowledge of the field in question. Second, it requires an honest and critical interpretation of existing equipments and persons—often treading on the toes of established authorities. Most editors neither know their fields well enough nor are inclined to question accepted leaders within it.

To the average editor this is a big, wonderful world, full of excitement. As a matter of fact, it is a world that needs education of fundamentals, and insight into the operations of its own equipments and personalities.

A philosopher has pointed out that shallow minds seek the new and sensational, whereas the genius examines and questions the ordinary and conventional. The editorial staff of Instruments Publishing Company attempts the latter and more difficult task. It honestly feels that it is almost alone in the instrument field in this approach to editing. Proof of our accomplishments lies in the many textbooks which have resulted from the articles in our publications.

M. Aronson
Instruments Publishing Co.

TECHNICAL WRITERS' INSTITUTE

Greater concentration on writing problems and more group participation will be features of the Seventh Annual Technical Writers' Institute to be conducted at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, N. Y., from June 8-12. The week-long Institute, directed by Professor Jay R. Gould, will be staffed by Rensselaer's technical writing staff, augmented by special speakers from industry and government.

Rensselaer's pioneer Institute, the first of its kind, was founded in 1953 to provide a forum and workshop for technical writers and editors. During the past six years nearly 500 representatives from 225 large companies, government agencies, and technical publishing companies have taken advantage of the intensive Monday through Friday seminar.

Attending groups are divided according to interest and specialization. The 1959 session will feature instruction on report writing, manual and instruction book writing, technical sales writing, article writing, government writing, supervision of company magazines, and illustration.

Basic instruction will be given by the Writers' Institute staff—Sterling P. Olmsted, Wentworth K. Brown, and Douglas H. Washburn, coauthors of the recently completed textbook, *The Uses of Language;* by Professors Robert A. Sencer, and Frederick Abbuhl, consultants to business and industry; and by Professor Gould, coauthor of the writing texts *Technical Reporting* and *Exposition: Technical and Popular.*

Sessions in specialized topics will be conducted by: S. J. Goodman, manager of technical publications, Air-

craft Radio Corporation; Richard F. Warren, supervisor of information, American Cyanamid Company; John J. Raffone, Information Staff, Bell Telephone Laboratories; M. M. Matthews, managing editor, Westinghouse *Engineer;* Richard W. Ford, supervisor of sales promotion, Data Processing Division of International Business Machines Corporation; George W. Boguslavsky, professor of psychology, RPI; and Lt. Colonel Herbert Herman, USAF, government specifiications.

Following the Technical Writers' Institute will be a medical writing program from Monday, June 15, through Wednesday, June 17. The Second Annual Medical Writers' Institute will be coordinated by Dr. Joseph F. Montague, prominent surgeon and writer, president of The New York Chapter of The American Medical Writers' Association. Outstanding medical lecturers will take part in the program.

Inquiries about both Writers' Institutes should be sent to Jay R. Gould, Director, Technical Writers' Institute, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, N. Y.

SLA ADOPTS NEW MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

By Richard A. Hanousek

Margaret H. Fuller (Mrs. Francis A.), President of Special Libraries Association (SLA) and librarian, American Iron and Steel Institute, has announced that the membership of Special Libraries Association has voted to take a major step toward raising professional standards in the field of special librarianship. By mail ballot the members approved amendments to the Association's constitution to provide for new membership requirements based on the educational qualifications and professional experience of individual members. These new requirements were recommended by a Professional Standards Committee after a two-year study of the problem.

These requirements which went into effect on January 1, 1959 must be met by all new members of the Association. Applicants for voting membership must be employed in a special library at the time of application.

Other basic qualifications for the senior (Active) class of membership are a degree in library science from a recognized library school plus three years of professional experience in a special library. There are several equivalent combinations of education and experience. The junior (Associate) membership requires the same education but less experience. There is also an Affiliate membership for those engaged in bibliographic work outside a special library. The Institutional membership has been replaced by a Sustaining membership for organizations desiring to support the Association financially.

Mrs. Fuller pointed out that the adoption of membership requirements by Special Libraries Association is of particular significance in view of the current emphasis on the importance of scientific and technical literature in military and civilian research programs. She stated that the fullest use of the rapidly growing body of technical knowledge can be made only if fully qualified librarians, who are experts in the selection, organization and dissemination of technical literature, are in charge of special libraries and information centers.

The Special Libraries Association is an international organization of over 5000 professional librarians and information experts who serve industry, business, scientific, educational and technical institutions, government, newspapers and other organizations. Since 1909 the Association has promoted the collection, organization and dissemination of information in specialized fields and has published professional and bibliographic books and journals. It will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of its founding at its annual convention next June in Atlantic City.

Further information about requirements for membership may be obtained from the Executive Secretary, Special Libraries Association, 31 East Tenth Street, New York 3, New York.

(Continued on Page 26)

ELECTRONIC INSTRUMENT INDUSTRY INSTRUCTION MANUAL PROCEDURES SURVEY

Frederick T. Van Veen

IN December, 1957, we made up a simple questionnaire dealing with the methods of preparing instruction manuals, and mailed it to 60 firms, selected from a buyers' guide as representative manufacturers of electronic instruments. Forty-two of these came back, of which 40 were usable. The two-thirds response, plus many enthusiastic comments added to the question sheets, proved that other publications people were eager to find out how their brethren went about tackling the problem of publishing manuals. The following is a summary of the results.

QUESTION 1. FIRST DRAFT PREPARED BY:

a. Design Engineer	18
b. Tech Writer	11
c. Both	8
d. Subcontracted	1
e. Sales Manager	1
f. Either a or b	1

Of the 18 who answered "design engineer," 10 stated in a subsequent question that they employed nobody full-time on instruction books, and subcontracted no more than 10 percent of them. Thus, in one quarter of the responding firms, the design engineer prepares not only a first draft, but probably all other drafts right up to printing. The point here is that the professional technical writer is hardly a permanent fixture in the industrial scene. Many companies do not now have the volume of technical literature to justify tech writers or editors. But there usually comes a time when the old policy of adapting and readapting to keep pace with increased publication demands breaks down, and the company either establishes a publications department or subcontracts all its books. Meanwhile, however, there must be at least a few design engineers with writer's cramps.

QUESTION 2. NUMBER OF PEOPLE ON INSTRUCTION MANUALS FULL-TIME:

a. None	15
b. One	8
c. Two	2
d. 3-5	7
e. 6-9	4
f. 10-15	3
g. 16 up	1

This question was meant to include not only writers and editors, but typists, illustrators, and all others who worked exclusively on instruction manuals. In view of the 15 who answered "none", some may have interpreted the question to mean editorial help only. Excluding one answer (of 100 plus) because it obviously referred to the complete publications staff of an organization producing many items other than instruments, 39 companies reported 111 full-time instruction-book people.

QUESTION 3. INSTRUCTION-BOOK GROUP PART OF:

a. Engineering	25
b. Sales	6
c. Publications	3
d. Advertising	1
e. Eng. and Sales	3
f. Administration	1
g. Service	1

Where an answer indicated that the instruction-book group was part of a publications department that in turn was part of a larger department, the count went to the larger department.

The 25 who answered "Engineering" obviously include those who, as mentioned earlier, have no "instruction-book group" as such. Discounting the companies who admit no full-time instruction-book personnel in question 2, the split between engineering and sales is more nearly even. The technical demands of instruction-book writing would seem to peg it as an engineering facility. On the other hand, no one can discount the value of an instruction manual as a potential selling device. (After all, what other medium has the captive audience of an instruction manual?)

QUESTION 4. PERCENT INSTRUCTION BOOKS WRITTEN TO MIL SPECS:

a. None	14

b. 1-20	11
c. 21-35	2
d. 36-50	3
e. 51 up	10

QUESTION 5. PERCENT INSTRUCTION BOOKS SUBCONTRACTED:

a. None	25
b. 1-20	11
c. 21-50	3
d. 51 up	1

In 22 instances the answers to questions 4 and 5 were the same. In the other 18, the percent to military specs exceeded the percent subcontracted. Thus over half the firms sidestep the task of keeping up with spec changes, approvals, etc., while 45 percent do some writing to specs themselves.

QUESTION 6. TYPE OF COMPOSITION USED MOST OFTEN:

a. Typeset	8
b. IBM or Varitype	19
c. Typewritten	8
d. Comb. a & b	3
b & c	2

QUESTION 7. TYPE OF REPRODUCTION USED MOST OFTEN:

a. Offset	22
b. Letterpress	3
c. Multilith	7
d. Comb. a & b	2
a & d	2
a & c	1
b & c	1
c & d	1

QUESTION 8. TYPE OF BINDING USED MOST OFTEN:

a. Looseleaf	10
b. Staple	6
c. Saddlestitch	5
d. Plastic Spiral	6
e. Comb. a & b	2
a, b & c	2
c & d	2
a & c	1
a & d	1
b & c	1

Although combinations were popular in questions 6 through 8 (despite the "most often" type question), the preference of IBM or Varitype composition and offset reproduction is heavy enough to speak for itself.

QUESTION 9. INTERIOR VIEWS:

a. Halftones with leaders	16
b. Line exploded views	2
c. Not used	9
d. Comb. a & b	11

QUESTION 10. PHOTOS:

a. Taken within instruction-book group	9
b. Taken in company, other department	6
c. Taken outside company	16
d. Comb. a & b	3

QUESTION 11. RETOUCHING:

a. Done within company	6
b. Done outside company	22
c. Comb. a & b	3
d. None	2

QUESTION 12. LINE ART:

a. Drawn within instruction-book group	13
b. Drawn in company drafting dept.	20
c. Drawn outside company	1
d. Comb. a & b	4
b & c	1

Rare is the instruction-book group that can have pictures taken, printed, and retouched, and line art drawn without looking to outside services. In fact, only four of those answering are so blessed. Some respondents left one or two of the artwork questions blank; perhaps these few do not include illustrations in their books.

The answers to two other questions are more easily discussed than tabulated. The first, labeled "Type Audience Written For", revealed that the technician outranks the engineer by more than 2-to-1 as the target of instruction-book writing, with "military" a close third. The designations "engineer," "technician," and "military" are anything but mutually exclusive, but despite overlaps we can surmise that most books are intentionally heavy on operation and service and light on theory.

The last question asked what means, if any, were used to obtain customer reaction to instruction manuals. Sixteen answered a flat "none." An equal number named sales reps, field engineers, district offices, etc., as their source of comment. The other few answers mentioned post cards enclosed with manuals, military agency approval or rejection, and service calls. Two facts are significant here. One is that many companies never bother to find out what the users think of their instruction manuals. The other is that if you really want to know the reaction, the sales department is the place to look. Sales engineers are often too busy to relay customer comment back to the publications crew, but a little prodding here may yield results.

The foregoing survey is deficient in several respects. First, in trying to divorce the "instruction-book group" from other publications activities, we probably ran afoul

of some publications groups that handle manuals, ad copy, house organs, bulletins, etc., using the same personnel and machinery for all. Moreover, no attempt was made to relate individual findings to company size. Diversity and complexity of products influences a company's publications requirements much more than do dollar volume and number of employees, and no one parameter seemed important enough to investigate.

Some respondents suggested possible future questions. One very important matter that we had overlooked was the method of keeping manuals up-to-date with equipment modifications. Another was the question of manuals for obsolete equipment. These would have made apt material for the survey, but they are left to the next inquisitor.

Finally, we all have much to learn about preparing good instruction material. Part of the problem lies in the difficulty of gleaning customer information, part in the reluctance of many firms to recognize the instruction manual as a full-fledged part of its product, and part in the lack of opportunity (until recently) for exchange of ideas in the technical writing profession. If this survey merely stimulates further such exchange, it has fulfilled its purpose. Ω

FREDERICK T. VAN VEEN is a technical editor with the General Radio Company in Cambridge, Mass. Readers should remember his "How To Be A Purist" in the January 1958 issue of the Review.

WRITING REPORTS WITH A TAPE RECORDER

Richard A. Hanousek

DO NOT let the title of this article deceive you. It does not mean that I sat down before a tape recorder and dictated a report. Far from it. I used the recorder to gather the material for the report; but I am getting ahead of my story.

First I would like to explain the problem I faced, and why I decided to use a tape recorder. Then I will describe the technique and the steps that were followed in preparing a report. I wish to show the usefulness of this approach in report writing, particularly, and in technical writing in general.

PROBLEM

I am a technical writer in an electronics development laboratory. Recently the laboratory worked on the design and construction of digital equipment to be used in a missile system. Everyone assigned to this project was hardpressed to produce a working prototype by a certain date. Simultaneously with this work, another department in our company was given the responsibility of turning out production models. The manufacturing department needed reports covering what had been done, how the prototype was supposed to work, and what difficulties were encountered. The engineers in my laboratory did not have time to write these reports; I was called upon to ghostwrite them.

All information for these reports was in the engineers' heads. Very little was written down, even in blueprint form. The blueprints themselves were outdated almost as soon as they were distributed. My main job was to get the necessary information, and prepare a rough draft. This, of course, would be checked for technical accuracy and completeness, and a formal report issued.

The major problem was obtaining information from persons who were too busy to talk to me. Fortunately, I had some unexpected assistance. In missile programs, things happen fast. Schedules on this program were changed, and the manufacturing department had to start work on production models before we had built and tested the prototype. A request was made that our engineers make an oral presentation.

The presentation would describe the workings of the equipment and its component circuitry, as well as design procedure and philosophy. Six working days, spread through three weeks' time, was allotted for the presentation. Each of our engineers would speak about his own area of interest. The information to be presented was just what I needed. They agreed to let me record the talks. My major problem was solved, I could get my information because I had captive speakers.

TECHNIQUE

The five steps used in this technique are:

1. Recording
2. Transcribing
3. Preparing rough draft
4. Obtaining approval
5. Producing the finished report

The first three steps are most important, and they will be discussed in detail. The fourth and fifth steps are well known.

Recording

The recording step requires the presence of the technical writer. Someone else cannot do the recording for him. "Why not?" you may ask. *Illustrations* is the answer.

Some of the engineers had prepared notes or illustrations which they handed out to the audience. Others spoke off-the-cuff, and used the blackboard for illustrative material. I had to copy down their illustrations and indicate where they were mentioned on the tape. The preprinted illustrations also had to be referenced. Unless this was done, I would not know which illustration the speaker was talking about when I got back to my office and listened to the recording.

I used a small dictating machine for recording (the only device I had available). It worked well except the one time it gave me trouble. I was fortunate in having another one available. One disadvantage with this machine was that the tape had to be changed after every half hour of recording. I would have preferred a long-playing tape to cut down the number of interruptions, but in one instance I put this disadvantage to good use. An engineer constantly talked with a pipe in his mouth. I got him to talk without benefit of the pipe, except during tape changes.

My microphone was reasonably sensitive. I was able to make a good recording although the speaker moved around. It even picked up questions asked from the

audience. These questions and their answers supplied useful information. Unfortunately, the microphone was also sensitive to background noise which hindered transcription.

Transcribing

You may ask why I have listed *transcribing* as a step in the technique. Can't you write the draft after listening to the tapes a few times? Undoubtedly some writers can; but most of us want to see facts written down so that they register fully on our minds. There is a lot of difference, too, between listening to someone speak and reading what he has spoken. Some facts can slip by when you only listen; but a manuscript of the talk leaves nothing out.

I saved myself a lot of time by transcribing the talks. It was much easier to find a fact by glancing through a typed draft, than to look for the right tape, put it on the machine and locate the item. This was especially true when reorganizing. The material from the tapes was double-spaced typed on 8½ x 11 paper. This averaged 10 pages to a roll of tape, or approximately 80 words a minute.

The typist could not type every word that was spoken; it was practically impossible. Each engineer had his own perculiar accent which resulted in transcription problems along with technical jargon. Background noises (rattling paper, coughs, fingers drumming on table tops, etc.) also caused some garbling of words. The typist was instructed to leave blank spaces where she could not understand a word.

After the transcriptions were completed, I went to a quiet corner and listened to the tapes as I read them. This enabled me to fill in most of the blank spaces, and correct some misinterpretations of technical words or regional accents.

Preparing Rough Drafts

With the transcriptions typed and checked, I began preparing a rough draft for the engineer's approval. Where the talk was well organized, I had no trouble. All I had to do was correct the grammar and incorporate the illustrations with the references.

If the talk was not well organized, then I prepared an outline. I discussed the outline with the engineer to insure that it had logical order and covered all important points. After the outline was prepared, I merely searched the transcripts for the necessary information.

While speaking, the engineers frequently pointed to various parts of a drawing to illustrate a point. I could not very easily point on a typewritten page; I used words. This became a little tedious when he was referring to a drawing which was three feet high and six feet long; then I used the zone references to locate the subject.

When the engineer did not make himself clear on a particular point, I would go back and ask him a few simple and direct questions. This did not take too much of his time, and it became a real assist in this technique.

Obtaining Approval

Now that I had my rough draft it was merely a question of getting the engineer to read it, to incorporate last minute changes, and to make the necessary corrections. Needless to say, engineers are quick to comment on somebody else's writing, but they are reluctant themselves to tackle any writing.

Producing the Finished Report

The approved rough draft was typed on multilith masters, duplicated, and distributed.

HELPFUL HINTS

This is a simple technique which has worked well for me. Let me brief a few things in using this technique.

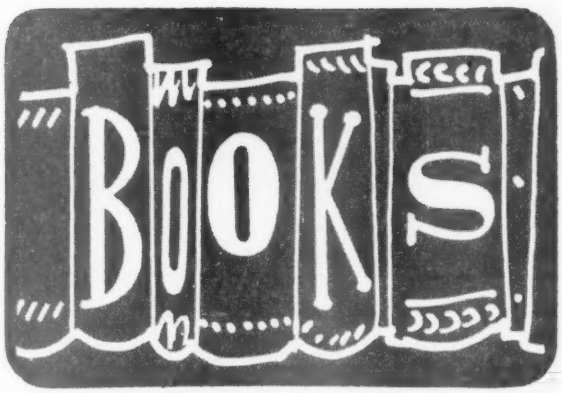
1. Check to see that the tape recorder is in good working order. Carry an extra set of tubes if necessary, and enough recording tape.
2. Keep background noises to a minimum.
3. Copy down all illustrations, and reference them to the place they are mentioned on the tape.
4. Have the speakers and the questioners talk out loud.

SUMMARY

I have found this technique to be especially useful in gathering information for technical reports. Yet, it need not be confined to reports alone. I am sure many writers of technical manuals could use the same approach in gathering information from engineers.

Engineers and scientists' time is indeed valuable, and understandably, they are annoyed when asked questions which have been answered before but not comprehended. Once you are fortunate enough to get an engineer to sit down and explain a piece of equipment or circuit, obtain all the information at that one time. By recording that talk you need not rely on your memory. The engineer theoretically is sitting beside you when you need him, and you've only interrupted his work but once. This saves him time, for which he is grateful, and it helps you too. Ω

RICHARD A. HANOUSEK is a technical writer and editor at the Electronics Laboratory of General Electric in Syracuse, New York. Prior to October 1957, for four and one-half years, he was with the General Electric Company in Schenectady where he wrote handbooks on autopilot systems. He is working for an M.S. in Journalism at Syracuse University. Mr. Hanousek is a member of STWE and serves as Assistant Editor of the STWE REVIEW.



CRITICAL WRITING FOR THE JOURNALIST. Roland E. Wolseley, 200 pages plus index. Philadelphia: Chilton Co., $5.00

Professor Wolseley, Chairman of the Magazine Department of the School of Journalism at Syracuse University, has written this book about journalistic criticism in all its varied forms.

And it takes a certain journalistic courage to write a review about a book concerned with critical writing. In Professor Wolseley's words, "Critical Writing, in present day American journalism, is the writing of essays and articles for publication and material for all delivery that appreciates and judges the arts." There is a very real difference between the reporting of news events and criticism which is actually "an expression of opinion about the performance" whether the performance is a book, a concert, a recital or any type of artistic expression. Reviews are valuable, for many of us obtain our first impressions, and sometimes our only impressions, about a new book from reading about it in reviews in the *New York Times* or the *Saturday Review*. Critical writing is important if only for the reason that the commercial success of the book may well depend on how it is treated in the reviews.

While it is undoubtedly true that most of us have, as technical writers and editors, only a passing interest in critical writing as such, it is equally true that we participate in, we write for, and in some cases we edit, technical and semi-technical magazines in our own specialities. Most of these magazines contain book reviews and Professor Wolseley's book is one of the few definitive volumes on the subject of critical writing. We wish that all of our reviewers could read it. Included in this book are: discussions of the extent, function, and purpose of critical writing; an examination of the occupation as a professional activity; an excellent section on the style, extent, and importance of literary criticism; and a look at some of the journals devoted to criticism as well as a discussion of the special pages and sections which are devoted to critical reviews.

This volume has, as do other of Professor Wolseley's books, an excellent selected bibliography and a complete index. The book is well written, carefully documented and presented in a most readable style. It will form a valuable part of the journalistic literature and a source of reference. The book is currently being used as a text in Professor Wolseley's course in Critical Writing at Syracuse University. It is based upon his own intimate experience with critical writing and the book shows the result of careful and thoughtful planning.

A. H. Lytel

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION PRACTICE IN INDUSTRY. T.E.R. Singer, editor. 304 pages. New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation. (1958). $8.75.

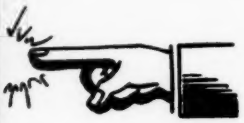
In his preface the editor remarks that ". . . there has been little published on the organization and operation of an information department; nor of the many activities carried out by these departments." Numerous books have been published about specific phases in this area, such as: library design, technical editing, communication aids, etc. This book brings all these phases under one cover.

Each chapter is a condensed but authoritative guide to its subject field. The fields include: technical writing, editing, illustrating, and classification, as well as the function of information services, research files, mechanical aids in presentations, punched cards, indexing, abstracting, and many others.

Twenty-two leading experts have contributed their know-how and experience in delineating the most efficient methods for handling technical information of all kinds. I happen to know two STWE members, who authored worthwhile chapters of the book; they are Ben Weil and Ethaline Cortelyou. Ben's chapter deals with "The Role of the Information-Service Group in Internal Communications." Two chapters appear under Ethaline's by-line; "Editing Technical Reports," and "Some Fundamentals of Designing Tables of Data." (She is an expert in this field.) In the first chapter, "The Industrial Information Department", Ernest F. Spitzer and F. E. McKenna give a general picture of an information department and define its tools, special reference aids, service functions, information files, reference services, special services, staff, and costs.

Most of the chapters have extensive bibliographies which are notably useful. A few chapters are profusely illustrated, particularly the one on "Mechanical Aids to the Effective Presentation of Technical Papers." The chapter on "Technical Illustrating", however, seems sadly lacking in illustrations. I was disappointed also with the "Technical Writing" chapter. This chapter covers product publicity, news releases, and technical

Technical Publications — Industrial Advertising



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reports, but makes no mention of technical manuals. It seems to me, an industrial information department ought to include a technical manual section. Since a large number of the contributors to this book are employed in the chemical industry, I can see a reason for this neglect.

The Reinhold organization is to be congratulated for adding this fine handbook to the growing literature in Communication Arts. The book is a good reference for those who are contemplating the development of an information department, or who wish to improve their existing department.

R. A. Hanousek

PARKING. Geoffrey Baker and Bruno Funaro. 202 pages. New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation. (1958). $9.50.

Parking is an attractive book by the same experts who prepared *Motels* and *Shopping Centers* in the Reinhold series on building types. The authors were well fitted for their task, Baker being associated with the Graduate Program in City Planning at Yale, where he took an M.A. in this field, and the late Bruno Funaro having been Assistant Dean of the Columbia University School of Architecture, which had awarded him a graduate degree.

Parking is designed for architects, engineers, town planners, merchants, bankers, city officials, and members of Planning, Zoning, and Parking Commissions. It attempts, in the words of the authors, to "make experience and ideas more understandable, and more easily usable, by all those—both professional and amateur—who are not trained as traffic engineers but find themselves face-to-face with a parking problem."

The book deals with such questions as why there is a parking problem, where cars should be put, how much space is required, what sort of parking best serves particular needs, and who should bear the cost. It is generously illustrated with excellent photographs and carefully prepared diagrams of parking lots, ramp garages. Attention ranges from the parking problems of suburban shopping centers to downtown stores, from hotels to drive-in banks, from office buildings to fringe parking lots connected by bus to the downtown area.

John C. Kohl, Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Michigan and a traffic specialist, to whom the book was submitted for a professional opinion, had this to say:

"*Parking* impresses me as an outstanding piece of writing as well as a graphic presentation. The text blends technical information with a planning approach and philosophy that are unusually well handled.

"Its technical analysis is simply presented in terms that a layman can understand, and yet avoids an 'elementary' impression. Tables and other design information are adequate without overburdening the text.

"In brief, I am enthusiastic about this work."

W. Earl Britton

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An Aid to the Presentation and Production of Technical Literature

By J. W. Godfrey, **Technical Instruction, B.B.C.;** and G. Parr, **Chapman & Hall, Ltd., London.** This book is based on the premise that the technical writer will have his task made easier and produce better work if he has a knowledge of the whole process of presenting and producing the information that he is setting down. The authors stress the point that good writing not only demands accuracy and clarity but also the ability to select illustrations, present data, and display the material in the most attractive way to the reader. Their book, therefore, is designed to give the writer of technical literature that insight into the technique of presentation and production.

The authors assume that the writer is grounded in the principles of composition and requires mainly to avoid common pitfalls and put polish on his work. They emphasize that the responsibility of the writer for his work should not cease up to the time when the final publication is laid on his desk. Examples throughout the book are drawn from electrical and electronic engineering practice. In the chapters describing equipment used in the production of technical publications, examples are given that are up-to-date and readily available.

1959. 340 pages. Illus. $8.50.

SCIENTIFIC GERMAN: A Concise Description of the Structural Elements of Scientific and Technical German
By George E. Condoyannis.
1957. 163 pages. $2.50.

SCIENTIFIC FRENCH: A Concise Description of the Structural Elements of Scientific and Technical French
By William N. Locke,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
1957. 112 pages. $2.50.

TECHNICAL REPORT WRITING
By James W. Souther, University of Washington.
1957. 70 pages. Illus. $2.95.

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NEWS AND VIEWS

(Continued from Page 17)

WRITING AND PUBLICATION IN INDUSTRY

In January the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn joined the ranks of other institutes of higher learning who have established annual technical writing seminars. The *Conference and Workshop,* designed for engineers, scientists, technical writers, and publications personnel, was held from January 26 through January 30. Major emphasis was placed on a comparative survey of current writing and publication practices in industry as well as on training in clear and flexible expression.

The conference lecturers included: David L. Caldwell, Proposal Manager, Process Plants Division, Foster Wheeler Corp.; Robert T. Hamlett, Director of Training and Personnel, Sperry-Gyroscope Company; William L. Laurence, Science Editor of the New York *Times;* Ronald J. Ross, Engineering Section Head for Advanced Studies, Sperry-Gyroscope Company; Louis N. Rowley, Editor and Publisher of *Power* Magazine; and George R. Wheatley, Department Chief, Public Relations, Western Electric Company.

GUIDE FOR WRITING REPORTS

The July 25, 1958 issue of *Electronics,* business edition, carried a short article entitled "Guide for Writing Reports." It was prepared by Frank Rockett, a former *Electronics* editor, now with the McGraw-Hill *Encyclopedia of Science and Technology.* Mr. Rockett reports that new surveys show engineers devote 10 percent of their time to writing, and most of them feel that one quarter of this time is productive. He describes the engineering-writing job as boiling down into two parts: getting the data on paper, then polishing it. Only the engineer can do the first part.

This article contained a chart which attempted to show how long it takes a typical engineer to prepare the first draft for technical reports of various lengths. A one-page report took 2 to 5 hours; 4-page, 9 to 17 hours; 8-page, 23 to 31 hours; 30-page, 85 to 97 hours. One common complication was that the author found he did not have enough data when he started to describe his work so he had to go back to the laboratory to get more information.

Mr. Rockett is in favor of having a technical writer or editor work along with the author, for some parts of a report do not have to be written by the engineer. If an outline is prepared, writing responsibility can be assigned, and this insures that the report will say what is intended. When writing the first draft the engineer-author should forget the so-called rules and save the polishing for later or leave it to a technical editor. This is Mr. Rockett's advice to save authors' time and to produce an effective report on schedule.

MACHINE COMPOSES SCHEMATICS

The December 5, 1958 issue of *Electronics,* engineering issue, contained a photo story on a mechanical-photographic process for preparing circuit diagrams as an alternative to manual drafting. The process was developed by Intertype Co., Brooklyn, N. Y., a division of Harris-Intertype Corp., and the General Electric Company, Industrial Control Dept., Roanoke, Va.

The basic equipment is a Fotosetter photographic line composing machine. The engineer prepares a circuit sketch on a special form. The form has a ¼-inch grid pattern which is used to locate symbols, nomenclature, and other information. The lines are numbered for ready reference.

The operator, using the grid as a reference, types out the diagram on the machine's keyboard, row by row. The machine has circulating matrices containing film negatives of symbols and characters. The circuit is first set up with component symbols and wiring lines, then a film positive is developed in a darkroom. This positive is placed in a position indicator in the machine and guides the operator in setting a second film containing nomenclature and other information. The film positives are placed together to form a composite film which is contact printed to make the final transparency. This transparency is then used to make copies by various reproduction methods.

TECHNICAL WRITING LITERATURE REVIEW

The Boston Chapter of STWE published, in June 1958, *A Review of Literature on Technical Writing.* These are Volumes I and II which cover the years 1956-1957 and 1957-1958. It is basically a compilation of reviews of books, pertinent to technical writing, published during these years. Each chapter deals with a specific subject such as "Report Writing, Scientific Writing, and Instruction Manuals," "Copy Preparation and Production," "Writing Direct English," etc.

This is a handy guide if you are going to invest in some books in the technical writing field. Copies sell for $1 and are available through the Boston Chapter, STWE, 12 Elm Street, Georgetown, Mass.

TECHNICAL WRITING SEMINAR

Military Electronics has initiated a Technical Writing Seminar page under the editorship of Christian K. Arnold. It is primarily an English usage column, telling the engineer-writers the proper uses of "hardly and scarcely", i.e., e.g., via, viz, etc. A handy little column for tech writers and editors too.

FIT YOUR SPEECH TO TIME

Our thanks to Dick Frehsee of IBM who sent us a page from the *DP SALE CURRENTS,* a little newspaper published by the Commercial Systems Development Dept. of IBM. This sheet contained a short article stressing the time it takes to deliver a speech, an important item at a convention or meeting where a time

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schedule has been established. This very short article had a chart showing the time required to deliver a speech of certain length at various speaking rates. A rate of 135-words-a-minute was considered to be average. The average typewritten page on 8½ x 11 inch paper, 25 lines to a page contains about 275 words (based on approximately 11 words to the line). Therefore, a twenty minute talk would take about 10 typewritten pages if delivered at the average rate.

This should give you an idea about how long it will take you to deliver your next talk. It may have to be shortened or expanded. Ω

EDITORIAL NOTES

(Continued from Page 4)

is applicable to the instruction manual. It is not enough to say "The drafting specs can go to the drafting department"; rather, we should know those specs also, as they too must appear in the book, and books are our bailiwick!

If we work to commercial specifications, or no specifications at all, we must work carefully to the best of our ability, and then stand by our work, regardless of criticism from less qualified sources.

A difficult compromise must be effected. We do not write "Deathless Prose", and as a result, inaccuracies must be deleted by the qualified engineer or editor or whomever we write for. We must stand by objectively and watch the blue pencil strike. We must do so and feel no remorse, for the "children of our brains" are not truly children . . . We cannot afford to be sensitive. On the other hand, when sentence structure is changed arbitrarily by such technical authorities, or a "better word" is desired, we must staunchly defend our work. These authorities have to be reminded that the writing is OUR department, and we give them the material to check for technical accuracy alone!

You will find that these unqualified sources, unqualified though they may be, will speak with a good deal of authority. The writer, when faced with such a situation, must answer with more authority, and stand ready to quote specifications, or if no specifications are involved, precedent.

Let's face it . . . Management buys the bread and butter. We can't behave in such a manner as to irritate the boss, but a compromise must be worked out if we are to preserve one shred of decency in our profession. I'm not advocating a "Workers Unite" policy, but I humbly and respectfully beg that my fellow writers take a little more of the fierce pride in their work that the novelists do . . . That we angrily resent all implications that we are frustrated engineers at best . . . That we know our jobs and handle them in a professional style. The professional approach will have a tremendous re-

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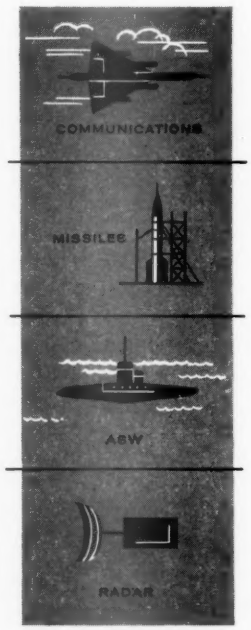

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ward. We will earn the respect of our fellow employees, and more important, the respect of our employers. I say let's hold our heads high. If we are ridiculed at the outset for such an attitude, the ridicule will soon turn to respect. We've been humble long enough.

Byron G. Wels

You have probably noted the *STWE Review* has some changes for 1959. Each of these has been adopted after careful consideration; we hope that the sum total of these will produce a better professional journal.

The biggest change is the absence of color on the inside pages. This permits two things; the black type for headlines and titles can be smaller and because the feature illustrations are done in black the dollar savings permits a larger journal. As a part of this change, there will be more words on a page.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the magazine remains unchanged. This is the letters page and we earnestly solicit continued contributions from our membership. In the January 1959 issue the letters page was devoted almost completely to a controversial letter from Dr. Israel Light of the Washington, D. C. chapter. We also hope to receive replies to his letter. The letters page is more than a feature of the magazine; it is actually the voice of the membership. Almost all of the mass circulation magazines have letters to the editor pages which are used for several purposes including a sampling of the feelings of the readership. There is only one mass circulation magazine in the world which does not have a letters page. We feel that this is an important means of communication and we plan to expand this feature as a further service to our membership.

Our editorial board has been augmented and now has five members. This is a very significant change because Dr. Frank R. Smith, of the Air Force Institute of Technology, has agreed to serve as one of our able corps of reviewers.

We have incorporated most of the general information about the magazine into a single column on page two. Our copyright notice and general mailing address is retained on the bottom of the first page. You may, of course, continue addressing editorial material directly to the editor at AVCO/Crosley, 1329 Arlington Street, Cincinnati 25, Ohio. But other mail should be addressed to the Columbus office.

Following the recent national convention there was no publication of the collected papers presented at the convention and there are no plans for a publication of such a volume. Because of this, we have selected some of the more significant papers for publication in the *Review*. These are now in process and you may expect to see these in article form during the remainder of the year.

Editor

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LETTERS

(Continued from Page 2)

January 23, 1959

Dear Mr. Geiger:

Mr. Allan Lytel, Editor of the *STWE Review*, has referred your letter of December 4, 1958, to me in my dual capacity as Vice President of the Society and Chairman of the Publications Committee. After consultation with other members of the Executive Board, I am replying officially for the Society.

I want to say at the outset that we are impressed with the enthusiasm with which you address yourself to the subject of STWE recognition. On the other hand I must say that in general the National Executive Board does not agree with your position. We are in complete agreement that we are striving for professional recognition, but we are quite certain that we do *not* need a committee to get the press, industry and government on our side.

Irving Jenks, the President of STWE, set out at the time he took office his ideas on what the long and short term goals of the Society should be. Professional recognition will only be achieved when we do the things that warrant it. In our view, first of all, the membership of the Society must broaden itself through education and experience. Secondly, standards of professionalism must be set out and accepted. Thirdly, the Society must sponsor publications of a professional standard. Fourthly, the Society must sponsor and encourage national and regional meetings that will facilitate the education of the membership and permit them to exchange ideas with others. Fifth, the Society must work with the academic community to establish training programs to develop young people who will be interested and who can qualify for the profession.

It is only this year that we have developed and accepted Canons of Ethics and have begun to publish a professional journal with any degree of regularity. We are still working on the establishment of other standards. There are only a handful of colleges and universities that have anything that looks like a technical writing training program. The area where we have made the greatest progress is the continued development of our annual convention programs.

Before we expend extensive efforts in public relations (please note that we have an active Public Relations Committee on which you are cordially invited to serve—just write Mr. Jenks or the Committee Chairman, Mr. George Goodstadt at 2 Park Avenue, New York to this effect), we need to do much more in the areas outlined in the preceding paragraphs. This is where we need to concentrate our activities now. And it is only after we have made much more progress in these areas that a committee such as you proposed will have something concrete to talk about. We are not selling ourselves short. We feel that we are only "kidding" ourselves if we try to sell something that exists presently only on a limited scale.

The Executive Board and your National Officers do not want to discourage further exploration of the general subject which you have proposed. To this end, I am requesting that the Editor of the *STWE Review* print your letter along with my reply in the next issue in which space is available.

Very truly yours,
T. A. Grogan
Vice President

December 12, 1958

Dear Mr. Lytel:

The 1958 Nobel Prize for Physics has been awarded to three scientists, one of them P. Cerenkov, credited with the discovery of the so-called Cerenkov radiation, which is a light emission caused by a special kind of energy loss suffered by a charged particle passing through a transparent solid with a speed greater than the speed of light in that solid.

However, it seems to be established beyond doubt that the original discoverer of the so-called Cerenkov effect itself is Lucien Mallet (cf. Comptes Rendus des Seances de l'Academie des Sciences (France) 247, no. 18, pages 1449-1451, November 3, 1958) and it is a regrettable fact that the great majority of international technical literature has perpetuated an error by ignoring his priority.

While the STWE has no authority to question the justness of the decision of the Nobel Prize Committee, it is the Society's moral obligation and it is well within its powers to stop a malpractice which is scientifically incorrect and also unfair to a worthy man of science such as Lucien Mallet.

The STWE could show an example in scientific discipline and objectivity by suggesting that its members should use instead of Cerenkov radiation, Cerenkov effect, Cerenkov counter, etc., some designation giving credit to the discoverer, such as Mallet (Cerenkov) radiation, or Mallet-Cerenkov effect, for example.

Yours truly,
Henry Hives
Aluminium Laboratories, Limited
Kingston, Ont.

A scientist friend of ours checked Mr. Hives' reference and found it to be true. He told us that there was also a statement there by Francis Perrin, a noted scientist, which substantiates Mallet's claim. Our friend says, "Mallet's claim could be a crank's, but not Perrin's." ED.

November 3, 1958

Dear Mr. Hanousek:

I am much interested in your item on the COMMITTEE FOR STANDARIZATION IN THE FIELD OF LIBRARY WORK AND DOCUMENTATION which appeared in the July *STWE Review*.

You stated that this committee of the American Standards Association has several groups, one of which is bibliographical references. I wonder whether this group has an objective to campaign for uniform format for bibliographies in scientific journal?

This has been in my mind a great deal for my work requires editing papers to be submitted to a variety of journals, with a variety of styles, some of which I consider cumbersome and illogical. Two years ago at an STWE convention I was in conversation on this subject with several members of the group, one of whom at least expressed pessimism, asserting that effort had been made by some organizations about such standardization but nothing had come of it. Perhaps the group from the American Standards Organization has acquired a second wind in this contest.

I shall appreciate any more complete information you can provide.

Yours truly,
D. F. Chichester
Chas. Pfizer & Co., Inc.
Technical Editor
Terre Haute, Ind.

February 7, 1959

Dear Mr. Lytel:

I am offering the following for your Letters page:

Two contributors to your Jan. '59 issue do some challenging that demonstrates clear thinking on the proposition Just who is STWE anyway?

Aronson (pp. 13 and 23) is entirely right, in my opinion, when he develops the theme that writing and editing happen to be two different fields. It is only on details that I would differ—editing requires judgment and experience so I would call it "learnable" rather than teachable; and stressing the difference between writer and editor should not make us forget that the ridge between the two has often been successfully crossed.

Light (p. 2) is in good company when he attacks over-specialization and urges STWE to speak for a broader membership rather than concentrate so much on the writers of what he calls "hardware" manuals. He urges that STWE step out and speak for communicators

toiling in the many fields of science and technology.

The two gentlemen might seem to be espousing different doctrines, specialization and anti-specialization. But they speak the same language in urging STWE to look at itself more closely.

I see no reason why the same organization should not be able to speak the mother tongue of both writers and editors, while letting each group be a clearly defined subdivision that rules its own roost. Similarly, I do not see why Light's "hardware" writers, the medical writers, the nuclear writers and so forth cannot have and run their own subgroups; or, as another example, why the grouping couldn't be done in a way appealing to the specific interests of those who write manuals, and of magazine writers, and of PR and advertising people, etc.

All this could lead to anarchy maybe —but also to effective union. It would all depend on how it's done.

It's also time to do some clear thinking about recruiting for this business. Here, again, how broad—or narrow—can one get? More and more schoolbells are ringing throughout the land of higher education, summoning the ambitious to courses in technical writing. More and more how-to books on such writing pour from the presses. But who should the guidance come from? The usual grammarian or appreciator of literature doesn't know technology, therefore cannot roll up his sleeves and talk the lingo and problems of his technical students. On the other hand, the usual technician hasn't soaked up enough good writing himself, so can hardly be the teacher. The same problem applies to authors of the how-to books. The over-all result is an outpouring of more would-be communicators contributing to more confusion.

We hear much fuss nowadays about redesigning the education of scientists and engineers. It's also time to redesign the education of technology's communicators.

Sincerely,
William Gilman
Copy Editor,
Product Engineering Magazine
McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., Inc.

February 5, 1959

Dear Mr. Lytel:

Once upon a time there was a wise old Indian who said:

> "Great Spirit, help me never to judge another until I have walked for at least a moon in his moccasins."

If I were wise that would be my entire comment on Mr. Aronson's letter in the January issue of *STWE Review* that was so critical of the October issue; but I'm not, so I'll go on. Evidently, Mr. Aronson believes that the Society of Technical Writers and Editors should devote itself to only the editorial phase of technical literature. Perhaps he would prefer that the Society specialize in only the particular sub-phase of editing that interests him.

I belong to a number of organizations that publish journals. Some of these journals are arranged better than the *STWE Review*, but all of them have a full-time editorial staff, which isn't true of the *STWE Review*. I consider it unusual when any two consecutive issues of a journal contain articles of direct interest to me. For my part, I'm glad that such a broad range of topics are covered in the *Review*. It is not only interesting, but helpful to get the other fellow's point of view.

Getting back to Mr. Aronson; he postulated an interesting hypothesis—"you either can or can't write, nobody can teach you." I have a few friends who make a fair living teaching people to write. They, and I, would be interested in an explanation of Mr. Aronson's theory. I earnestly suggest that he submit an article on the subject for publication in the *STWE Review*.

Yours very truly,
Deere & Company
W. G. Berry
Advertising Department
Moline, Illinois

February 3, 1959

Dear Mr. Lytel:

When you put the January *Review* to bed, did you hear a loud swoosh from out in Kansas? If you did, it was the apoplectic ghost of William Allen White, who had just learned that Mr. Milton Aronson thinks there's a difference between writing and editing.

Yep, I know he said "technical writing," indicating that he thinks there's a difference between technical writing and . . . well, just writing. I have written essays, poetry, editorials, news stories, features, ad copy, brochures, service bulletins, operator's manuals, maintenance manuals, structural repair handbooks, parts catalogs—you name it and I've probably had a crack at it. And the only difference I've found between technical writing and the others is that generally it's easier and it pays better.

Maybe we're getting mixed up in our semantics. Anyhow, the job that Mr. Aronson describes as "editing" on page 13 sure sounds like writing to me. I've been doing it for the last eight years, but nobody called me an editor, except in jest. And nobody edited my manuscripts to "adapt it to the level of the reader." It just got thrown back in my face!

I fail to see how anyone can edit a manuscript without knowing anything about writing, nor write one without knowing anything about editing. They aren't two distinct fields; they're inseparable parts of the same thing. I'll agree that it's a good idea, where possible, to have someone else check your material for ambiguities. But both should be writers.

I'll agree with Mr. Aronson, also, that to try to teach engineers to write is foolish, for the very reason he states: it's "contrary to the inclinations of the persons involved." Also, as he states, it's inefficient and wasteful of engineering talent. But if the engineer's rough notes constitute technical writing, then all the writers I've ever met are editors. And they do a lot of writing. Not much literature is produced, to be sure, but a lot of writing, some of it good.

I think this semantic rat race points up one of our fundamental problems in *STWE:* we haven't any clear idea of what a technical writer is, or what he does. And we're making some pretty snobbish noises about professional status and qualifications, for a bunch who can't define our own jobs.

Enough of polemics, for now. Don't worry about the brickbats—my Dad, who used to edit a fire-eating weekly always delighted in them. He maintained they were sure signs his stuff was being read. I think you're doing a first-class job with the *Review*—all but the slick paper. Why not put it on a good EF book instead of enamel? It's cheaper, the type is more legible without the glare and if you'll use 100-line screens the halftones will print quite nicely. Or try Warren's Cumberland Gloss. It has a lot less shine than the sheet you're using.

Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,
Robert D. Resing
2755 North Meridan
Wichita 4, Kansas

February 6, 1959

Dear Mr. Lytel:

Thank you for the advance copy of *STWE Review* for January. Once again it is an excellent example of how a magazine should be presented.

Dr. Light, in "Letters", and Milton Aronson, in both "Letters" and "News and Views", seem to be concerned with the fact that *STWE* is not giving sufficient emphasis to editors and to writers in medical and scientific fields. That you have provided them with space to air their views shows the true spirit of our organization, and I am sure that if

suitable articles are submitted from writers in other than the technical manual field, you will be only too pleased to publish them.

Personally, I like to think that the really capable technical writer is sufficiently versatile that he can turn his hand to any kind of writing; fiction, semi-technical articles, scientific papers, proposals, reports, manuals, parts lists, and sales brochures. A good technical writer should also be capable of doubling as an editor, and should even be able to turn out rough illustrations with enough detail for reviewing purposes . . .

Yours very truly,
Eric J. Young
9411 Hilgert Drive
Cleveland 4, Ohio

December 15, 1958

Dear Mr. Lytel:

You may regard this letter as my formal permission to publish my paper—"Formal Training for Technical Writers—an Industrial Viewpoint"—in the *STWE Review*. However, this article has already been published in the current issue of *Industrial Science and Engineering*. If you have no objection to publishing an article which has appeared elsewhere, you can obtain permission from the magazine by writing to them at 201 North Wells Street, Chicago 6, Illinois.

Thank you for your interest in my paper. If I can be of any other assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,
Paul I. Berman
Stavid Engineering, Inc.
Plainfield, New Jersey

December 11, 1958

Dear Mr. Lytel:

You have my permission to publish my paper, "Scientific Abstracting and Indexing Services", in the *STWE Review*. However, some editing will be required for publication purposes, I am sure.

Sincerely yours,
Randall G. Rice
Associate Editor
Chemical Abstracts
Columbus, Ohio

December 11, 1958

Dear Mr. Lytel:

I should be glad to have you publish "Writing and the Study of Grammar" in the *STWE Review*. I presume that since I have reserved copyright, this will not prevent my using it elsewhere, either as is or revised, if I wish.

Since we do not receive the *Review* in our college library, perhaps you would be so kind as to send me a copy or two when it comes out. If reprints are available, I would like 50.

I enjoyed giving the paper very much, and am flattered that you consider it worthy of publication.

Sincerely yours,
W. N. Francis
Professor of English
Franklin and Marshall College
Lancaster, Penn.

Some of the most interesting and significant papers presented at this past Washington convention will be printed in the REVIEW as articles. We wish to thank all of the people who gave permission for the publication of their material. **ED.**

January 26, 1959

Dear Mr. Hanousek:

We thank you very much for the copy of the January issue of the *STWE Review*. Your excellent review of the book ONE HUNDRED AND ONE DONT'S FOR INVENTORS is greatly appreciated.

In particular we felt the review was encouraging to all writers of STWE as a source for self-analysis and increased article productivity.

Very truly yours,
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Frank V. Higgins

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Professor Chris Sanford, co-founder of R.P.I.'s graduate curriculum in technical writing, died on Saturday, January 31, after a long illness. Professor Sanford will be remembered by members of the Society for his paper entitled "The Derivation of the Readability Formula," delivered at the 3rd Annual General Meeting of the Association of Technical Writers and Editors and published subsequently in the Summer 1956 issue of the *Technical Writing Review*. He will be remembered also, by those among us who have known him personally, both as colleague and as teacher on the staff of the Technical Writers' Institute at R.P.I.

Professor Sanford joined the R.P.I. faculty in 1949 as an assistant professor of English and became associate professor two years later. He was chiefly responsible for the establishment of a graduate program in technical writing at the institute in 1953 and was actively engaged in teaching in the program until shortly before his death. For the past two years, he has been the editor of the quarterly *Rensselaer Review of Graduate Study*.

A native of England, Professor Sanford was a Canadian citizen at the time of his death. He received his B.A. in natural science from Oxford University in 1922 and his M.A. in chemistry in 1947.

He served in the British Army from 1918 to 1920 and in the Canadian Regular Army from 1942 to 1946, retiring with the rank of lieutenant colonel. Colonel Sanford served for three years in India and graduated from the staff college at Ouetta, India, in 1936. During World War II, Colonel Sanford was in command of divisional signals overseas and had been a member of the Royal Canadian Military Institute.

Professor Sanford was an instructor in chemistry at Queens University, Canada, from 1923 to 1924 and from 1946 to 1949 he was assistant professor of English at the University of British Columbia.

Following his retirement from the Army in 1946, Professor Sanford's chief professional interest was the teaching of writing to engineers and scientists.

He was an associate of the Royal Institute of Chemistry, a professional member of the Chemical Institute of Canada and a senior member of the Society of Technical Writers and Editors.

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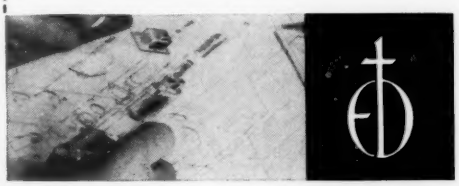
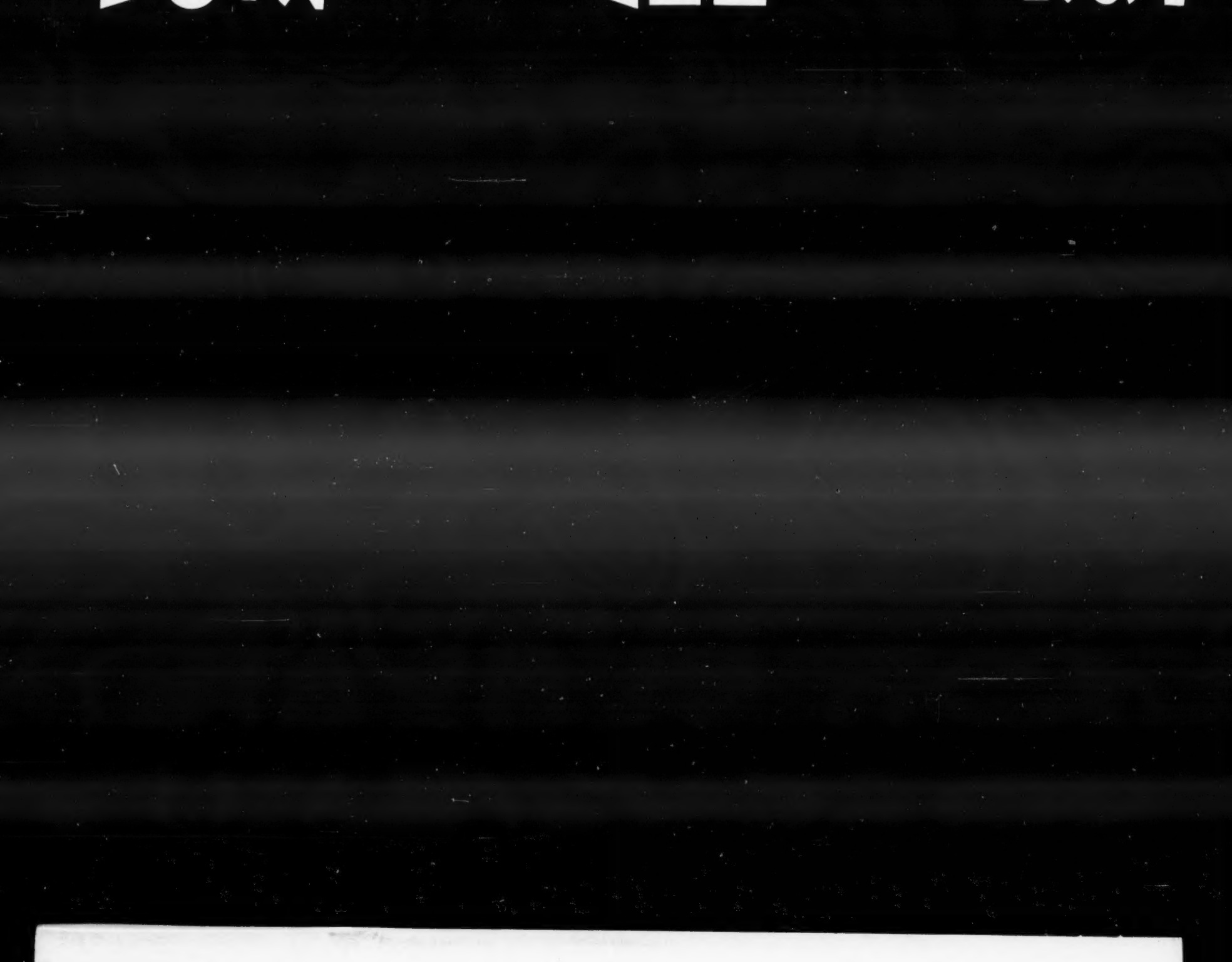
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